THE

Life & Death

OF

EDMUND STAUNTON

D. D.

To which is added,

I. His TREATISE of

Christian Conference.

II. His DIALOGUE

BETWIXT A

Minister and a Stranger.

Published by *Richard Mayo* of *Kingston*, Minister of the Gospel.

Οὐ γὰρ μικρὸν ῥοπὴν εἰς σωτηρίαν τὰ ὑποδείγματα Clem. Alexand

Longum iter est per præcepta, breve & efficax per exemplum. Senec.

Be followers of them who by faith and patience inherit the promises, Hebr. vi. 12.

LONDON, Printed for *Th: Parkhurst*, and are to be Sold at the Bible and three Crowns in *Cheapside*, near *Mercers Chapel*: And at the Gilded Bible on *London-bridge*, under the Gate. 1673.

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[illegible]DON, [illegible] to be Sold at the [illegible] three [illegible] Chap-[illegible] near [illegible] Chapel: And at the Gilded Table on London [illegible] under the Gate. 1673.

To the Inhabitants of the Town of *Kingston* upon *Thames*, and to ſuch of them eſpecially as love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity.

Dearly Beloved,

O you of Right belongs the Dedication of the enſuing Narrative, partly by reaſon of your quondam *intereſt in him who is the ſubject of it, and partly by reaſon of your preſent intereſt in him who is the Compiler and Publiſher of it. The Apoſtle tells the* Corinthians, *That* Paul, Apollo, *and* Cephas, were theirs; *and they that labour, or have laboured amongſt you in the* Word *and* Doctrine *may be ſaid as truly to be yours. When you read what is here written of the memorable, and praiſe-worthy actions of your Reverend Paſtor now deceaſed, you* 1 Cor. 3. 22.

will be ready to say, as she did of Solomon, *That the* one half is not told you, *for you* have fully known (*as he tells Timothy*) his doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience. *However, enough is here said to set the world, and you, a Copy to write after. And oh! that you may not only know, but* diligently follow (*as the Apostles words may be construed*) *his doctrine and manner of living.* Be ye followers of him *as he was* of Christ. *Brethren,* my hearts desire, and earnest prayer to God for you all, is, that you may be saved; *that he, and I, who have endeavoured to* espouse you to Christ, *may* present you as a chaste virgin unto him; *but* I fear least by any means as the Serpent beguiled *Eve* through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. *I have somewhat against some of you, but I wont reveal that upon the house-top. This worthy servant of God, to his dying day, would make honourable mention of the people of* Kingston; *and as he reported,*

2 Tim. 3. 10.

Συ δε παρηκολουθησας μου, &c. Tu vero habes exemplar ad quod te formes, actiones omnes, meus quibus, præsens fuisti. *Grot. in locum.*

2 Cor 11. 2, 3.

so

ſo I have for many years experienc't, that they are very courteous and kind to their Miniſter. He ſaid it, and I ſubſcribe it, That a Miniſter (if it be not his own fault) may live as comfortably in Kingſton, *as in moſt Pariſhes of* England. *And I do here make an open, and grateful acknowledgment of your accumulated kindneſſes to me, and mine; and do wiſh that I were in a capacity to ſerve you, as I have ſerv'd you, in the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt. Yet ſtill I ſhall not be wanting, as my preſent circumſtances will allow it, to farther your Souls health and welfare; and in this ſhort Epiſtle, give me leave to* ſtir up (*may I ſay*) your 2 Pet. 3. 1. pure minds by way of remembrance, *and to recommend to you ſome Rules of* the new Creature, *and* Covenant, *in the practice whereof you will find peace.*

I. *Make Chriſt the main end of your life, let all your actions as the lines of a circumference meet in him as their centre. Live to him that dyed for you, and with whom you hope to live for ever. Read* 2 Cor. 5. 15. Phil. 1. 20, 21. *You*

meet in Scripture with several abstracts and abridgements of mans duty; sometimes 'tis said to consist in his fearing God, *and* keeping his Commandments; *sometimes in his* loving God with all his heart, *&c. and his* loving his neighbour as himself: *and may it not be sum'd up once again, and affirm'd, That it mainly consists in a mans believing in, and living to the Lord Jesus Christ?*

II. *Live as those that must shortly dye. Let your opinion of sin, and of the world, be the same now, as it will be then; and remember who sayes, That if* a man dye, Job 14.14. he shall not live again, *and make the use of it that he doth. Some have said, That if the damned in Hell were suffer'd to come again upon the Stage of this world, they would Act over the same Part they have formerly Acted; but I am not bound to be of their belief: but this I believe, That it shall never be put to the tryal, and that no man will be allow'd a second edition of his life, to amend the errors of the first.*

III. *Keep*

III. *Keep your ſelves* clean *and* unſpotted *from the evils of the times in which you live, as fiſhes in ſalt water retain their freſhneſs, ſo do you in evil dayes hold faſt your uprightneſs. Be not corrupted by the ungodly practiſes of ſome, nor leaven'd by the unſound opinions of others. Beloved,* believe not every ſpirit, *but* try the ſpirits, whither they be of God, becauſe many falſe Prophets are gone abroad into the world. *You are in daily danger of being miſled,* watch and pray, leaſt you fall into tentation, *and the ſnares of the Devil. I am jealous of you with a godly jealouſie.* The God of all grace who hath call'd you to his eternal glory by Chriſt Jeſus, make you perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen and ſettle you.

IV. *Give all diligence to make your* calling *and* election ſure. *Let this be paſt controverſie whither you are* converted *and* born again. *Don't ſatisfie your ſelves with a meer peradventure in this matter; 'tis not wiſdom to put it to the hazard whither you ſhall be ſav'd, or damn'd to all eternity. You may run a*

venture in other things, but not in this. Seeing assurance is attainable, as undoubtedly it is, never be at rest till you have obtained it. You would be sure in other cases, why not in this case? the comforts and advantages of having it, will pay you for all your pains in getting it.

V. Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Growth in grace, is one of the best evidences of the truth of grace; the true Christian is a thriving Christian. If there be no growth, there is no life. Pictures and Images are alwayes the same. You desire other things should thrive and prosper, why not your Souls also? You would not come behind others in Temporals, why do you let others go so far before you in Spiritual things? How many of later standing, and lesser means, have made great progress in the wayes of God? 'tis not enough for you to grow, but you must grow apace. The Vine in the Vineyard, the Cedar in Lebanon, the Calf in the Stall, are all of them Scripture-emblems of a Believers growth and increase.

VI. Let

VI. *Let* brotherly love *in particular* continue *and* abound. *This is the* old *and the* new Commandment. *There is no duty more preſt in the Word of God, and no duty leſs practis'd by the people of God. Surely the end is at hand, becauſe of the flaming out of ſin, and of the freezing of love. Theſe laſt dayes have introduc't a great many love-killing principles, that former Ages were ignorant of: we want the Apoſtle* John *amongſt us, or ſome of his ſpirit, to ſtir up Chriſtians* to love one another. *Remember wherein the duties of brotherly love conſiſt, in relieving, inſtructing, admoniſhing, exhorting, comforting, and bearing with one another. He that ſayes* he loves his brother, *and lives in the neglect of theſe,* is a lyar, *and the* truth is not in him.

VII. *Let your Converſation in the world be with* ſimplicity *and* godly ſincerity; *this is the way to have favour with God,* he hath pleaſure herein; *he* deſires truth in the inward parts, *and reckons ſincerity for perfection; yea, this* 2 Chron. 29. 17.

is

is the way to have rejoycing in your selves. *Sincerity affords comfort in every condition of life, and in the hour of death. A sincere person, if he lives in trouble, he ordinarily* dyes in peace. *He's sure to find acceptance for all his services, and indulgence for all his offences. Oh that it may be said of you, as of another in Scripture-story, that you are men and women* without guile.

VIII. Set the Lord alwayes before you. *Remember he sees you when you are most out of sight; his eyes are never off from you, let your eyes* be ever towards him. *One thought it would awe the* Romans, *and make them serious, if they did alwayes apprehend that* Cato *was in company with them. It would certainly have a good influence upon our hearts and lives, if we did apprehend that God was alwayes at our elbows, and that* his eyes are upon all our wayes and doings. *It is an excellent preservative against sin, and provocation to duty, to carry a remembrance of God about with us into all places and companies.*

IX. *Fill*

IX. *Fill up all your particular relations with duties. Relative duties are better known, than practiſed; nature it ſelf teacheth them, the very Heathen have excelled herein; ſurely if our* righteouſneſs muſt exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, *it muſt not fall ſhort of that of Heathens and Infidels: it ſounds like a contradiction, for one to be a good Chriſtian, and a bad husband or wife, father or child, maſter or ſervant,* &c.

X. *Promote the power and practice of Religion in your ſeveral Families. Remember who ſaid he would* walk in his houſe; *not only in Gods, but in his own houſe,* with a perfect heart; *reſolve with Joſhua,* not only to engage your perſons, but your *houſes* and *families* in the *ſervice of God. Of old, the Families of Chriſtians were call'd* Churches, *but now many of them are rather* Synagogues of Satan, *than* Churches of Chriſt: *not* Bethel's, *but* Bethaven's *houſes of vanity and ſin. It is commonly ſaid, That Governours of Families,* Pſal. 121. 1.

lies, as well as Pastors of Churches, have curam animarum, *the charge and care of Souls; and if any perish through your neglect,* their blood will be required at your hands. *How many of your Children and Servants may say to you another day, bloody Parents, and bloody Masters you have been to us; and may they not now say, Fathers, Masters, care you not that we perish? Oh let your Families be instructed; do I require this,* Deut. 6. 6, 7, 8, &c. Eph. 6. 4. *or doth God require it? who will one day require an account of your doing of it. Let there be morning and evening sacrifices of praise and prayer offered up to God in your dwellings. God forbid there should be one prayerless habitation in* Kingston.

Micah 6. 8. XI. Walk humbly with God. *This is the main thing that he requires of you; without this, let your other excellencies be never so many, they are of no account with him. A proud persons graces and good works do him hurt; whilst an humble man is made better by his evil deeds, a proud man is made worse by*

by his good deeds, Oh pray God, that ſaith he will give grace to the humble, *to give you that excellent grace of humility. You may be brought low, and yet not be lowly; many are humbled, that are not humble.* Plectuntur ſed non flectuntur. *Salvian.*

XII. *Follow the good examples of others. There are many patterns for imitation in Scripture, there's the example of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf,* be as he was in the world. *The Word of God aboundeth alſo with many other excellent inſtances and preſidents; it ſhews you many evil examples, which are as Sea-marks to forewarn you; and many good examples, which are as Land-marks to direct you: you have other excellent patterns too beſides thoſe upon record in Scripture. Take, my Brethren, your old Paſtor, whoſe Life I have here delineated, and* who hath ſpoken to you in the Name of the Lord, *for an* example of patience, and all other branches of piety. *Therefore is the ſtory of his* Life and Death *dedicated*

to

to you, that it may be imitated by you: But of this I ſpake ſomewhat before.

Let us remember here, That I am writing an Epiſtle, and not a Treatiſe; ergo manum de tabula. *Though it were eaſie to give you many dozens more of ſuch directions as theſe, I have been longer, becauſe, though I have often Preach't to you, yet I never wrote to you before. As I have often ſuggeſted the counſels of God to yous ears, ſo I would ſet ſome few of them before your eyes. I have an ardent affection for you; you have had Miniſters that have Preach't, and liv'd better than I have done, but never any that lov'd you better than I do. I love your Souls, and their eternal welfare, and would be loth to meet any of you at Chriſts Tribunal in an unregenerate and Chriſtleſs condition; I would not the many Sermons I have Preach't to you, ſhould be at that day, as ſo many Bills of Indictment againſt you.*

Finally, Brethren, farewell, be of one mind, live in peace, *and let me cloſe*

this

this Epiſtle, as Jude *doth his*, build up your ſelves in your moſt holy faith, pray in the Holy Ghoſt, keep your ſelves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life: *Unto his grace and favour I commend you all, and ſubſcribe my ſelf*

Your unworthy Miniſter

Nov. 29. 1672. And Well-wiſher,

Richard Mayo.

THE LIFE and DEATH OF Edmund Staunton, *S. T. D.*

IT is uſuall (even in the Holy Scripture) when mention is made of any perſons of Note, to record their Genealogy. Parents do ſometimes bring luſtre unto their Children, and Children do ſometimes bring renowne unto their Parents. This excellent perſon (who is the ſubject of the enſuing narrative) was borne *Anno* 1600 of the Ancient and worſhipfull Family of the *Stauntons* in *Bedfordſhire*, his Father Sr *Francis Staunton* had ſeveral ſons, of whoſe Education he was more then ordinarily

careful: though he left them good estates, yet he did not think it enough that they should barely live upon the estates he left them. He was of *Solomons* mind, that *wisdome was good with an inheritance*, Eccl.7.11. And yet, He was of opinion too that an inheritance was little worth without wisdome: he abhor'd the two Epidemical vices of our *English* Gallants, which in time are procreative of many more; the one is ignorance, and the other Idleness. He resolv'd therefore to traine up his children in learning, not onely that it might be an ornament to them, but that they might be serviceable by it to the Church or Commonwealth. Our *Edmund* (one of the younger brothers) after he was furnisht with a competency of Grammar learning, was sent to *Oxford*, and admitted into *C.C.C.* where he so ply'd his study, and got such applause, that whilst he was yet an undergraduate, he was chosen a Probationer fellow in that Colledge before 18 of his Seniors (a *Bedfordshire* place falling void by the death of Mr *Andrews*, a fellow of the house.)

Eccl.7.11. Otium fortunæ grandioris vitium. Symach. l.10.Ep.2.

Nihil sordidius imo crudelius quam si rempublicam is arroderet, qui nihil in eam suo labore conferret. Jul. Capit. in vit. Anton. Pii.

When

When he was about eighteen years of Age, he fell dangerously sick in the Colledge, and was very farre spent, and near unto death before those about him understood his distemper; 'till anon a skilful Physitian coming in, and finding it to be a Pleurisie, gave order that a veine should be forthwith opened; whereupon a Chirurgeon was immediately sent for, but it was long ere he could be found; at length the messenger brought him from a Táverne, and though he saw the way thither, yet he did not know how to do his work when he came there; he strook the Patients arme twice, but no more blood came then if he had prickt him in the palme of his hand; In this posture the sottish Chirurgion leaves him (it being late) all night; but when he had slept himself sober, he came the next morning very early, and knockt at the Colledge Gate, which being open'd, he hastily ran to his Chamber, and askt if he were yet alive? and coming in presently open'd a veine in his Arme which bled freely, and the Patient (half dead) soon after recover'd & grew well again.

Another ſtrange deliverance he met with a little after, when he was newly Batchelour of Arts, going into the water alone to waſh himſelf, and not being able to ſwim, he fell into a deep hole where his feet could feel no bottome, but (as the Providence of God order'd it) he caught hold of a little turfe of Graſs by the bankſide, by means whereof he climb'd up the bank: if that little hold had fail'd him, he had in all probability miſcarried.

Theſe merciſull deliverances and preſervations were preparatory to that good work, which about this time God began in his heart: for about the year 1620. (to uſe his own words which I have by me in a manuſcript under his own hand) *I had many ſad and ſerious thoughts concerning my ſpiritual and eternal eſtate. Then upon the advice of* Dr Bareroft *I bought* Brinſley's *watch (the ſecond part.) where the ſins againſt the commandments are ſet down in order, and I fell upon the work of examination; wherein this ſeems remarkeable, that reading over the ſeveral ſins there mention'd, my heart (ſuch was the blindneſs and deceitfulneſs*

ceitfulneſs of it) cry'd, not guilty of any one of them; whereupon I began to ſuſpect my heart, and calling upon God to enlighten mine eyes, and diſcover my ſins to me, and then reading them over again, I judg'd my ſelf guilty, very guilty even of moſt of the ſins there ſet down and enumerated. After this I lay about two months under a ſpirit of bondage, being full of fears and inward trouble, ſo that many times I durſt not cloſe mine eyes in the night leaſt I ſhould awake in Hell; I thought every night the Devil would come for me, and fetch me away: but anon the Lord was graciouſly pleas'd to ſhine upon me, and this remarkeable paſſage I ſhall never forget. That being one evening at prayer all alone in the Darke, (I remember the Chamber in C. C. C. and the corner of the Chamber well) I was very earneſt with God for the manifeſtation of his love to my ſoule, and the aſſurance of pardon for my ſins, and at length I brake out into theſe words, (or words to this purpoſe) Lord I will not cut off thy preſence, I will not gai off from my knees till thou ſpeak comfort to me, whereupon I was immediately fill'd

Non ab te abſquete diſcedam.

with a ſtrong perſwaſion of the love of God to my ſoule, and with joyes unſpeakable and full of Glory.

From this time he apply'd himſelf to the diligent reading of the Scripture, and to the ſtudy of Divinity; and when he was Maſter of Arts, his Father will'd him to chooſe his profeſſion, whether that of a Lawyer, a Phyſitian, or a Preacher; he readily pitcht upon the latter, telling his Father that he had for ſome time paſt inclin'd his ſtudies that way, and that he eſteem'd the turning of ſoules to righteouſneſs to be the moſt deſireable work in all the world, and that it would have the greater reward hereafter, though the other callings were like to bring in more wealth and honour here.

Vide Mr. *Chr. Loves ſpeech upon Tower Hill.*

His tender Father would not thwart, but rather encourage him in this his pious reſolution, and to that end he layd out to procure a good living (or place of ſettlement) for him: in meane time, our *Edmund* was not idle; but having an invitation to preach a lecture on the Lords day in the afternoon at *Witny* about ten miles from *Oxford*, he accep-

ted

ted of of it; there he continued preaching well nigh half a year, and had comfortable ſeales of his Miniſtry; as *Epenetus* and *Stephanas* were *Pauls* firſt fruits in *Achaia*, ſo there are ſome yet living (or were lately alive) in that place who were his firſt fruits unto Chriſt. So acceptable were his labours during his abode there, that hearers from all parts round about flockt to him, *as the Doves to their Windowes.* This was not very pleaſing to him who was incumbent there; he therefore ſpent the more time in reading Prayers, that this novel lecturer might have the leſſe for Preaching his Sermons: and when he had protracted the Common Prayers all he could, he himſelf would go out of the Church, being followed by no one but his Clark, whom he would not ſuffer to call a *Pſalme*, but the Lecturer himſelf, or one Mr. *Martin* (an inhabitant of the Town, one that fear'd God above many) was faine to ſupply his roome. The text of Scripture which he a long time inſiſted on was that excellent ſaying of *Solomons*, Prov. 23. 23. *Buy the truth and ſell it not:* whereupon the incumbent, when

Rom. 16. 5. *1 Cor.* 16. 15.

he met any going to the Church, as he was going from it, would aske them in a jeering manner; *What! you are now going to buy the Truth.*

His Father and friends had now provided a place for him, *viz. Bushy* in *Hartfordshire*; he the more inclin'd to accept it, because his continuance at *Witny* was precarious, and the envy and opposition of the Minister of the place not to be remov'd: To *Bushy* therefore he goes, where he hath a welcome reception from all the Inhabitants, but especially from those that had any savour of Religion. There he Preacht and Catechiz'd on the Lords Dayes, and other days, to the great benefit of his hearers who attended his Ministry, not only those that dwelt in *Bushy*, but those that liv'd at *Watford*, and other adjacent places. Hear the testimony of a Godly ancient Minister (yet living) under his own hand. *That little time* (saith he) *which* E. S. *spent in* Bushy *was not without good success, many persons in my own hearing having acknowledged his Ministry to be the means of their conversion.* During his abode in *Bushy*, which was about

about two years, he repair'd, or rather rebuilt at his own charge the dwelling houſe belonging to the Miniſter: at this time alſo he marryed a Wife (the daughter of one Mr. *Scudamore* of *Watford*, a man of good account in thoſe parts both for Eſtate and Godlineſs) by her he had one daughter.

Being call'd upon to Preach a Viſitation Sermon, he perform'd it with great approbation, only becauſe he inveighed againſt *non-reſidency* and *pluralities*, ſome that were concerned were greatly offended, one of them ſaying, *he might the better ſpeak againſt many livings, having got ſo good a one himſelf.*

And indeed it was ſo good, that one Dr *Seaton* (who was ſeated at *Kingſton* upon *Thames* in *Surry*) had a longing mind after it, and either making or finding a flaw in his Title, ſoon diſpoſſeſt him of it. But firſt there was a Tryal at Law about it, the Attourney general *Noy* (who was of Councel for *Seaton*) likeing the ingenuity of *Staunton*, mov'd for an Exchange, and ſo brought it to paſs, that *Seaton* ſhould have *Buſhy*, and *Staunton* ſhould have *Kingſton*;

Kingſton: both parties were agreed, *Staunton* preferr'd work before wages, and lik't *Kingſton* the better, becauſe his opportunities of ſervice would be there the greater: he was of his mind, who was wont to ſay, his opportunities were his greateſt riches. But whilſt he thought of ſetling there, he met with a diſappointment, *Seaton* having gotten *Buſhy* would not part with *Kingſton*, but either *Staunton* muſt be his Curate there, or he muſt be gone from thence: hereupon Mr. *Staunton* repairs to *Noy*, relates to him the diſingenuous carriage of his Client. *Noy* was of too generous a ſpirit to approve this baſeneſs; ſending therefore for *Seaton*, he tells him plainly, unleſs he would reſigne *Kingſtone*, he would ſoon pick a hole in his Title to *Buſhy*. Several alſo of the Inhabitants of *Kingſton* (who priz'd Mr. *Staunton's* Miniſtry, and were willing to purchaſe it at any rate) did ſo work with Dr. *Seaton*, that in a ſhort time he reſign'd, upon which Mr. *Staunton* had the preſentation, and ſoon after inſtitution and induction.

Dr. *Winter in vita ejus.*

In

In this Town he continued about twenty years, endeavouring *to fulfill the miniſtry he had received of the Lord*; there he Preach'd twice on the Lords day, and Catechized the younger and ignorant ſort of people; and he did not ſatisfie himſelf *in teaching them publikely*, but (though the place was large and populous) *he taught them alſo from houſe to houſe*. There alſo he ſet up a weekly Lecture, which was ſupply'd in their turnes, by as eminent Preachers as that part of *England* did afford; and within a little time, partly by his powerful Preaching, partly by his holy and exemplary life (for, as *John the Baptiſt*, in the one he was *a burning*, in the other a *ſhining light*) he wrought a general reformation throughout the Town, both amongſt Magiſtrates and people; he was lov'd by all thoſe that were Godly, and fear'd by thoſe that were wicked. The good ſeed that he there ſow'd doth ſpring up to this very day, and many now living can hardly mention him with their mouths, without tears in their Eyes. Nor was there any love loſt betwixt them; he would to the laſt call the

Col. 4.17

Act. 20. 20.

One ſaith of Mr. *Perkins that as his preaching was a Comment on his text, ſo his practice was a comment on his preaching*

People

People of *Kingſton* (as *Paul* did the *Philippians*) *His joy and his crown*; and would often ſay, That were it not for ſome wrangling perſons, a Miniſter might live as comfortable a life amongſt them, as amongſt any people in *England*. *Phil.* 4. 1.

And as by his Miniſtry, a work of reformation was wrought upon the Town in general, ſo alſo a work of ſaving converſion was wrought upon many ſoules in particular; he relates (in ſome memoires, that he hath left behind him under his own hand) that in 1648. when he left the place, there were thirty perſons which gave him a Paper ſubſcribed by themſelves, wherein they own'd him for their ſpiritual Father; and doubtleſs there were many thirties in and about the Town, who could have made the like acknowledgment.

He marryed a ſecond wife yet living

Whilſt he liv'd here begetting many Sons and Daughters unto God, he had alſo many Sons and Daughters begotten of his own body, Ten of which lie buried in one Grave in the Pariſh Church of *Kingſton*, on which he hath laid

laid a faire Stone with this *Epitaph* fairly Engraven on it:

Here lye the Bodies

Of { Francis. Richard. Mary. Mathew. Mary. } { Richard. Edmund. Edmund. Sarah. Richard. }

Children which the Lord graciously gave to *Edmund Staunton* D. D. late Minister of *Kingston* upon *Thames*, now President of *C. C. C.* in *Oxford*, by *Mary* his Wife, Daughter of *Richard Balthrope* Esq; Servant to the late Queen *Elizabeth*.

Ten Children in one Grave! a dreadful sight,
Seven Sons, & Daughters three, Jobs number right.
Childhood and youth are vain, death reigns o're all,
Even those that never sin'd like Adams *fall.*
But why o're all? in the first man every one
Sinned and fell, not he himself alone.
Our hope's in Christ the second Adam; He
Who saves the Elect from sin and misery.
What's that to us poor children? 'tis our Creed,
God is a God to the faithful and their seed.
Sleep on dear Children, never more to wake,
'Till Christ doth raise you, and to glory take.

He

He left only one Son living at his death; and may he long live to inherit his Fathers Graces, as he doth his Eſtate.

For three years and a halfe.

In the year 1635 it pleas'd the Authority of the Nation to permit ſports and paſtimes unto the people on the Lords Day, and a Warrant was ordered to be read in all Churches to that purpoſe: thoſe Miniſters who refuſed to read it were for ſome time ſuſpended; in which number was Mr *Staunton*; he was of his mind that ſaid, It was better to work then ſport, to plow then Dance on the Sabbath Day; he would rather looſe his place, then countenance ſuch a practiſe amongſt his people.

Præſtat arare quam ſaltare die ſabbathi. Aug.

During his ſuſpenſion he took his degree of Doctor in Divinity in *Oxford*; which he did, to uſe his own words, that he might put the greater honour upon his ſufferings; when he anſwered in *Comitiis*, and oppoſed in *Veſperiis*, he was wonderfully applauded by all that were preſent. There were ſeveral Doctors in the Univerſity whoſe fingers did itch to

to be dealing with him, becauſe he was a Country Miniſter and a Puritan, amongſt which was a Doctor, whoſe name I ſhall conceale (though a man of great note amongſt them) who was ſo miſerably nonpluſt by *Staunton*, that the Auditors hiſs'd at him, and one call'd out for a Candle that the Doctor might ſee his Arguments; of this good Providence *Staunton* himſelf takes thankful notice, giving all the glory to God, making uſe of that Scripture, him *that honoureth me I will honour.* At that time alſo he Preacht in the Univerſity upon thoſe words of Chriſt in *Mar.* 8.36. *What will it profit a man to gain the whole world, and looſe his own ſoule*, &c. of which Sermon he ſayes, That God did both graciouſly aſſiſt him in the Preaching of it, and wonderfully proſper it when Preacht.

He was call'd on to preach ſeveral times before the Parliament, and his ſermons ordered to be Printed.

When the Aſſembly of Divines was call'd at *Weſtminſter*, Dr. *Staunton* was choſen one of that Reverend Aſſembly, and was in good eſteem amongſt them, inſomuch that he was nominated for one of the ſix that Preacht that uſefull Lecture, morning by morning, in *Weſtminſter* Abby.

In

In the year 1648 there were Viſitors appointed for the Univerſity of *Oxford*, who diſcharg'd Dr *Newlin* from his headſhip in *C. C. C.* and no man was thought ſo fit to ſucceed in that place as Dr. *Staunton*. That Colledge had been happy in an eminently Learned and Godly Preſident before, the famous Doctor *John Reynolds*, and now it was bleſt againe with the reſidence and regency of this excellent perſon; what Colledge in either of the Univerſities can ſhew ſuch another pair of Governours?

Here he continued above twelve years; in all which time his behaviour was very exemplary, not onely to thoſe that were of his own Colledge, but to the heads of other Colledges in that Univerſity: Be pleaſed to take a ſhort account of his Converſation, from the Pen of one that was Scholar and Fellow of the Houſe, the greateſt part of the time that he was Preſident: Thus he Writes. *At his firſt coming to the Colledge he put in execution, and that vigorouſly, all ſuch Statutes as tended moſt to the advancement of Learning and Religion,*

and

and was frequently himself present at all Lectures and other Exercises, to encourage the Studious, and reprehend the negligent. He set up a Divinity Lecture every Lords Day early in the Morning in the Colledge Chappel, for the initiating and exercising the Elder Students in order to the work of the Ministry. He constantly Catechis'd the younger sort publiquely in the Chappel every Saturday. He preacht once or twice every Lords Day, to the edification and comfort of many; besides his constant course in the University Church and Colledge Chappel, and several lectures in the Country, whereunto he was alwayes most ready, rather seeking opportunities then declining them. He had every week a meeting at his own lodgings for prayer and spiritual Conference, as well of the members of the Colledge as others, wherein himself alwayes bore the principal part, bringing forth out of his store of experimental knowledg things new and old. He was constantly present in publique duties of worship in the Chappel morning and evening, observing all, and reproving any that were negligent and remiss. He took great care to introduce and elect into the

Colledge ſuch as he either ſaw or heard to have ſome appearances of grace, at leaſt ſuch as were docible and inclineable towards that which is good. Spiritual diſcourſe was his meat and drink; and when he ſat at meals in the Colledge Hall, his conſtant courſe was either from the Chapter then Read, or from ſome occaſion or other, to ſpeak that which might tend to the inſtruction of thoſe who were preſent, and to call up their minds to ſome heavenly contemplation. In the year 1660. Being diſcharged from the Colledge; where he had been ſo eminent a bleſſing by his *prudent government* and *Pious example*; and none know this ſo well as ſuch whoſe lot was caſt to live there under his conſtant *inſtruction* and *diſcipline*; both which were ſo far effectual, that *Religion* and *Learning* ſcarce flouriſhed more in any one Society in the whole *Univerſity* then in that little *Nurſery*, he reckoned it adviſeable to withdraw alſo from the *City*, in which he had ſown many handfuls of precious *ſeed*, and he always well watered it with his *tears*; few that I ever heard of *Preached* with greater *Affection* and

2 *Tim.* 3. 10, 11.

leſſe

leſs *Affectation*. But when the time of his departure came, there are living that ſtill know and remember with what ſad hearts his dear *Friends*, *Scholars* and *Citizens*, parted with him. Some have aſſured me, it was much-what like *Paules* departure from *Epheſus*, taking his laſt leave of the *Elders*, Acts 20. latter end. *Where they all wept ſore and fell on* Pauls *neck, and kiſſed him, ſorrowing moſt of all for the words which he ſpake, that they ſhould ſee his face no more: and they accompanied him out of the City*; From the Famous Univerſity and City.

Recommending of himſelf unto the *Divine Providence*, to fix the Bounds of his habitation for him; his firſt flight was to *Rickmerſworth*, a ſmall Market Town in *Hertfordſhire*, where he had not been long, but he had a very kind *welcome*, both from the *Gentry*, as a *Gentleman*, and other *good Chriſtians* of inferiour rank, as a *Miniſter* of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

His *firſt* and *chief* deſign, when a little acquainted in the place, was to make way for the ſettlement of an *able*

Miniſter of the *New Teſtament* there; reckoning that one of the beſt accommodations of a houſe was wanting when ſuch a Miniſter was wanting; and he uſed to ſay, That *Rickmerſworth* were a good place if there were better *water*, meaning a better *Miniſter* there: and that the deſign took no effect, was not through any default of his, all means being uſed on his part for the bringing that purpoſe to paſs; but however he quickly found the way to that *Pulpit* himſelf: and becauſe the *entrance* being narrower there then in ſome *places*, he ſought out a *wider door*, and more *effectuall*; and I believe it may be affirmed he found above *twenty more*, ſcarce one Sabbath paſſing wherein he *Preached* not the *Goſpel* of the *kingdome* in a new *Pulpit*; and his paines, though an *old man*, and ſomewhat *infirm* in *Perſon*, were rarely once only, but twice in *one day*. Thus this *good man in labours more abundant, in the morning ſowes his ſeed, and in the evening withholds not his hand, ſo liberal he was of his ſpiritual Almes, not knowing whether ſhould proſper this or that, or whether they both might not*

be

be alike good, Eccl. 11.6. ſo that in imitation of the *great Apoſtle*, by the power of the Spirit of God, he even *from Jeruſalem, round about to Illyricum fully Preached the Goſpel of Chriſt*.

So this excellent Miniſter of our Lord Jeſus, from *Rickmerſworth* even round about unto the utmoſt borders of the *County*, and into the neighbouring *Counties* alſo, he was *ſpending*, and being *ſpent* in the ſervice of his great *Lord* and *Maſter*.

By all this the Reader may *gather* that our Doctor had not layne idle in the Univerſity, 'till he was ruſted and cankered away and fit for no further uſe in the houſe of God; but as it was ſaid of *Joſeph*, that his *bow* ſtill abode in *ſtrength*; ſo it was with his parts, *memory* and with his *affections* alſo; and he was conſtant untill the act of *uniformity* impoſed that general *ſilence* upon all *nonconformiſt*, Auguſt. 24. 1662. But yet neither after this time was he willing to be *idle*, every week almoſt keeping one day as a *private faſt* in his own, or elſe in ſome other godly *Miniſters* or Chriſtian Family, as to humb'e

himself for his own sins, so for the abominations that were in the midst of the *land*; and it cannot be easily *forgotten*, with what *brokenness* of *spirit*, and with what a *dissolved soul*, he would still take up some *hours* himself on those extraordinary occasions, either in the *word*, or *prayer*, or both: for indeed, he was *mighty in prayer*, as well as in the *Scriptures*, as it is said of *Apollo*.

Having passed, I think, some two yeares; his wife now labouring under some *weaknesses*, and being weary with the *burden* of *houshold affairs*, he retired to a Chamber or two in a private Family some miles distant, where he was very *useful*; he much *inlightned*, and quickly *leavened* the habitation: his *Ministerial Gifts* and graces were such, as that indeed he *perfumed* the whole *house*. As long as he lived there, there was a *Church* alwayes in that *house*; and I presume the governour, and children, and servants, do bless God for his presence, and conference, and exemplary conversation, to this day, and may they never loose the *savour of the knowledg of Christ*, *and the sense of the power of the world*

world to come, that he manifeſted, and they were under, during his abode with them. From thence he removed to another private family (and I believe his frequent removes were, that he might have renewed opportunity of doing more good, and God more ſervice) where he was entertained as an *Angel* of *God*. This Family was near S. *Albans*, in which Town, from that time he was a great inſtrument in the hand of *God* for good, to correct ſome *extravagancies* amongſt ſome *people* there, by his *ſober principles*, and great *moderation* of ſpirit, and the noble exerciſes of *ſelf-denial* and *charity*, being no burden unto any, but being *crafty*, *catching them with guile*, 2 Cor. 12. 16.

His laſt remove was to a place called *Bovingden*, a little village; and I queſtion whether ever it had been mentioned in any ſtory, if this good man had not liv'd and ended his *days* there; he was led thither by the invitation of *a religious* and very kind *Gentleman*, freely accommodating him, with all the conveniences of an *habitation* of his in that place. But he once told me, that whatſoever

ſoever was ſaved that way, he ſtill expended proportionably in *charitable uſes*, making conſcience to give it either in *mony* or *books* to the *poor*, to this and the *neighbouring* places; and I believe he hath deſtributed ſeveral hundreds of ſhort Catechiſms, beſides ſome dozens of little books (of that great light of our age) Entitled *The call to the Unconverted.* During his abode here, he continued daily to attend the duty of the Family, wherein he was *inſtructing* the ſouls belonging thereunto. And if one or more of the poor of that place chanced to come in, he would ſay, they were welcome, and that God came along with them, and the poor have the Goſpel preached unto them. In this place he enjoy'd great privacy, which he greatly priz'd; and had be been born for himſelf alone, he could alwayes have choſen to have liv'd thus alone. How many worthy's in the world have prefer'd retirement to the greateſt preferments in Church or State, and have thought Scepters and Myters not worthy to be compared with it. But he could not thus ſatifie himſelf: that of

Paul

Paul was often in his mouth, *Wo be to me if I preach not the Goſpel*; he was of *Calvins* mind, who would not his Lord ſhould come and find him idle. Wherefore he rode often to St. *Albans* or ſome other adjacent place, and once or twice a year to *London* and *Kingſton*; and ſeeing he could not preach in a Church to many, he would preach in a Chamber to a few. Tis not the place or company that commends our preaching to God. What excellent Sermons have been preacht to deſpicable auditories, and in very ordinary and contemptible places. *Pauls* meeting place in *Macedonia* was the River ſide, and his hearers a few of the weaker Sex: Our Lord himſelf preacht a long Sermon once to one timorous man; and at another time in the open aire he preacht at large to one ſilly woman. *Acts* 16. 13. *John* c. 3. c. 4.

Thus this eminent ſervant of God, like a torch or candle with lighting others, conſumed and waſted himſelf. On the eighth of *July Anno Dom.* 1671. *& ætatis ſuæ* 71. he was ſeiz'd all on one ſide with the dead palſy, by reaſon of which his ſpeech much faild him, ſo

ſo that he ſpake little and ſeldome. A friend coming to viſit him, and asking him how he did, he anſwered in the words of the Prophet, *In meaſure God debateth with me, and in the day of the Eaſt-wind he ſtayeth his rough wind.* A while after he ſaid to a friend that ſtood by him; I neither fear death, nor deſire life, but am willing to be at Gods diſpoſal: At another time he uttered theſe words very audibly, *I know that my redeemer liveth*; and by and by he repeated the fifth verſe of the one and thirtieth Pſalme in Meter:

Into thy hand Lord I commit
My ſpirit, which is thy due;
For why, thou haſt redeemed it,
Oh Lord my God moſt true.

He preſt the by-ſtanders ſo long as he was able to many wholſome duties; As to make ſure of Heaven in the time of health; to keep their evidences fair and unblotted, To remember and keep holy the Sabbath day, (of which he himſelf, as youl find hereafter, was a moſt careful obſerver.) When he could

could not ſpeak himſelfe, he would deſire others to read the Scriptures to him, directing to the places which he moſt deſired, which were for the moſt part the *Pſalmes* of *David*. He either was without pain, or without any great feeling of it.

Quid ſentit crus in nervo quum animus in cœlo? Tertull.

On the tenth of *July* his ſpeech was quite taken from him, but yet his underſtanding and memory continued with him; and for the ſpace of four dayes he lay (as all about him might perceive) in a very comfortable condition, lifting up his eyes and hands towards Heaven with a ſmiling and cheerful countenance. An upright life doth uſually end in a peaceable death. When a Miniſter (a little before his departure) pray'd with him, he ſhew'd great affection all the while; and when prayer was ended he took him by the hand, and held it faſt, expreſſing by outward ſignes his inward joy in God, and thanks to him.

Qualis vita finis ita.

The 14 of *July* this ſhining light went out. Oh for young *Timothys* to ſtand up in the room of ſuch aged *Pauls*. He was buried the ſeventeenth day of the

the ſame moneth at *Bovingden* aforeſaid.

And is this all? may ſome ſay; Is this ſuch a rare and exemplary life? read on, and you'l find the beſt wine is kept till laſt, to do right to the memory of this bleſſed man; as alſo to help the memory of the reader, I have choſen a new way (and though it be unuſual, yet I judge it very uſeful) that is, methodically and orderly in the cloſe of all, to ſet down the imitable graces and practiſes of this worthy perſon; it may be the reader will better heed and remember them, then if they had been confuſedly ſcattered up and down the preceding Narrative. I ſhall begin with

1. His care and diligence in ſelf examination. This duty of ſelf-examination is much out of date with many, yea I fear moſt Miniſters and Chriſtians; and yet how frequently is it urg'd, both in the old and New Teſtament: This holy man would often preſs it upon others, and did much practiſe it himſelf. I judg'd it would tend greatly to edification, if I did tranſcribe ſome paſ-

Pſal.4.4. 13.5. 1 Cor.

ſages

ſages out of his forementioned Manuſcript to this purpoſe. Pardon me if I am ſomewhat large upon this head, it is intended Reader for thy good. Thus then he Writes.

Evidences for heaven, which (if my heart deceive me not) are in me, through the gracious workings of Gods ſpirit upon are, me.

1. *Effectual calling. That this is a good evidence appears from* Rom. 8. 30. 2 Pet. 1. 10. *The Calling I had was about the year* 162[illegible]. *and ſo he relates as in page of this Narrative.*

2. *Change of Company, chooſing the ſociety of the Godly, ſhuning the ſociety of the wicked,* Pſal. 1. 1. Pſal. 26. 4, 5. Pſ. 119. 115. Acts 9. 26.

To this my heart anſwers affirmatively, Feb. 4. 1629. *And doth ſo ſtill,* Apr. 3. 1663. *ſtill ſo* May 2. 1666. and again April 2. 1668, *&c.*

3. *Univerſalty of obedience,* Pſ. 119. 6. *and* Pſal. 139. *the two laſt verſes. To this my heart anſwers affirmatively,* Feb. 4. 1629. *doth ſo ſtill,* April 3. 1663. *as before.*

4. *Love*

4. *Love to the Godly as such*, 1 John 3. 14. *To this my heart answers affirmatively*, Feb. 4. 1629, &c.

5. *Sincerity, desiring more to approve my heart to God, then my wayes to men, aiming more at Gods glory then my own profit, applause*, &c. 2 Cor. 1. 12.

My heart answers affirmatively, ut supra.

6. *Kindly meltings and mournings for sin upon the sence of Gods free-love in Christ*, Zach. 12. 10. 2 Cor. 7. 9, 10.

My heart answers affirmatively, &c. *Goeing to* Hempsteed *to preach as I was meditating on the rode neer* Langley *on the love of God in calling such a one as I am, when thousands more noble, more mighty, more wise and learned* &c. *lye in ignorance and prophaness, I burst out into a fit of weeping, and my heart was by and by fill'd with abundance of joy and rejoycing.*

7. *Zeal for God, and against sin*, John. 2. 17. 2 Cor. 7. 11. *My heart answers affirmatively*, &c.

8. *A love of and a longing for Christs appearing*, 2 Tim. 4. 8. Heb. 9. 6. Rev. 22. 17, 20. *I cant say there hath been such a*

longing

longing in me after Christs coming, at leaſt not ſo full and frequent, as in many others; yet in prayer and meditation the thoughts of a future eſtate wherein I ſhould never ſin more, but be ſatisfy'd with Gods likeneſs, have been very ſweet and comfortable to me.

Once on the rode (in a day of my greateſt rejoycing as to outward comforts and mercies) it lightned, thundred and rained much: my thoughts were, what if this ſhould be the day of judgment? What if I ſhould ſee Chriſt coming preſently in the Clouds? the anſwer of my ſoul was welcome, welcome, welcome; this fill'd me with much peace and comfort.

9. *Speech gracious, or with grace,* Prov. 10.21. Eph.4.29.

My heart anſwers affirmatively, Feb.4. 1629. *when I have met with any ignorant perſons willing to be inſtructed, it hath been my manner (to God be the glory and praiſe of it) ta put good diſcourſe on foot, and to foward it when others have begun it.*

10. *Bleſſing God for, and rejoycing in the gifts and graces of others,* Joh. 29. 30.

My

My heart answers affirmatively, Feb. 4. 1629. &c. *Though my heart is apt enough (the Lord humble and help me) to envy and detract from others, yet through mercy I find,*

1. *A heart blessing God for others gifts and graces outshining mine.*

2. *Rejoycing that others do God greater and better service, and bringing more glory to him then I do or can.*

11. *The spirit of prayer*, Acts 9.11. Rom. 8. 15. *my heart answers affirmatively*, Feb. 4. 1629. &c.

12. *A careful sanctificati-*

Cum sublatum e conspectu lumen est, & conticuit uxor (moris jam mei conscia) totum diem mecum scrutor, facta ac dicta mea remetior, nihil mihi abscondo, nihil transeo. Quare enim quid quam in erroribus meis timerem cum possum dicere, vide ne istud amplius facias, nunc tibi ignosco. Sen. lib. 3. de Ira.

of the Sabbath, Comman. 4. Isa. 56. 4, 5. & 58. 13, 14. *My heart answers affirmat.* Feb. 4. 1629. &c. *But here I will take up, although he adds fourteen evidences more, with other considerable enlargements, and descants upon these already mentioned. This is enough (yet I hope the Reader will not think it too much) to shew what was his constant practise in this particular. Onely let this be added, that according to the Psal-*

mists

mists Councel, and other good mens custome, he was wont to commune with his heart in the night season, then there is the greatest silence, and the least interruption. May the Relater and Reader write after this Copy.

2. His keeping a Journal or Diary of Gods mercies.

A second imitable practise in this man of God was his keeping a Journal or Catalogue of the mercies of God. What a furtherance this is to faith and love and thankfulness, they best know who accustome themselves to it. This was the ancient practise of Gods people, and it was his wont and manner. Of the many collections of this kind in his manuscript, take these few instances.

*Gen.*32.10,11. 1 *Sa.*17, 36. *Ps.*103.2. 2 *Ti.*4.17. 18.

Three things we are apt to forget, the word we hear, the sins we commit, the mercies we receive; all these do παρρεῖν *slip out of our minds, as water out of a Colander or sive.*

'When I was about ten years of Age, 'being sick of a feavour, and given up for 'dead, of mine own accord (I think my 'good God suggesting it) I askt for but-'ter-milk, which taking by little and lit-'tle my feavour abated, and I recove-'red.

'When about 14 years old swinging 'in a rope in my Fathers Kitchin at 'Birchmore, which was paved with free-'stone, and of an high roof, which I en-'deavouring to touch with back and 'belly; when I was very high, and my 'face downward, the rope broke, I fell 'down flat, and there lay as dead and 'speechless; but anon (the Lord appea-'ring for my help) I brake out into a 'violent bleeding at mouth or nose, or 'both, and so by degrees (through the 'blessing of the Lord) revived and reco-'vered. Going to bed in my Tutors 'Chamber at *Oxford*, and having a Wax 'Candle in a Roll burning by me, I 'fell a sleep, and left it burning on a 'deal box full of Linnen: the box and 'Linnen was burned, but the bed not 'toucht, though close to it, &c.

'When I was Minister of *Kingston*, 'I drank Ink one morning instead of 'Muscadine, yet had no hurt.

'*April.* 8. 59. at *Oxford* my Wife be-'ing in her closet very late, which was 'hung with much Linnen round about, 'and I in bed and a sleep in the cham-ber adjoyning, the Candle taking hold

of

of the Linnen ſet it on fire, which flamed round about her; ſhe, the Lord 'aſſiſting of her, beſtir'd her ſelf, pull'd 'down the linnen, trod it underfoot, 'maſterd the fire: I was not waked, nor 'ſhe much dammaged.

Feb. 1. 1666. At the *Bell* Inne in *Alderſgate-ſtreet London*, between eight and 'nine of the Clock at night, miſſing the 'way to my Chamber, I went upon the 'Leads unrailed, pitching my ſtaffe be-'fore me, I went ſo nigh the precipice 'or downfal into the yard, that I found 'no roome for my ſtaff: but a ſtep be-'tween me and death! Oh what ſhall 'I render! *&c.* There are many more of 'this ſort, but this may ſerve for a taſt. 'Whilſt thou readeſt, reſolve to imitate and write after this Copy.

3. His laborioufneſs in the Miniſtry of the word.

The next commendable excellency of this holy man which I ſhall mention, was his diligence and laborioufneſs in preaching the Goſpel. Some hints of this you had before: his great care was to fulfill the Miniſtry he had received of the Lord; his heart was in this work, he did

Miniſter verbi es? hoc age.

did *hoc agere*, this was his τὸ ἔργον, it was his meat and drink. He would often ſay, he feard to hear that rebuke from Chriſt another day, *thou wicked and ſlothfull ſervant*, wicked becauſe ſlothfull. When he came to viſit his friends, if they did not aske, to be ſure he would offer his paines amongſt them: What, he would ſay, is there no work here for a Preacher? and though his Sermons were ſometimes offer'd, they were never ordinary ware. He never offer'd that to God in that way which coſt him nothing; he alwayes diſliked immethodical & indigeſted Preaching; indeed he was a workman that needed not to be aſhamed of his work: and yet he was as great an enemy to quaint, as he was to crude Preaching; next to painfulneſs he lik'd plainneſs in a Preacher: theſe two are not inconſiſtent. Miniſters are termed Gods Interpreters, yet many times their Sermons are ſuch, that they need others to be their interpreters.

Mat. 25.26. There is no difference betwixt nequam & nequaquam, an evil, and an idle ſervant.

Tis ſaid of Mr. Perkins, *that his Sermons were not ſo plain, but the pionſly learned did admire them; nor ſo learned, but the plain and ſimple did underſtand them.*

preters. Many when they Preach ſhoot over the heads (as one ſayes) of moſt of their hearers: that is no intelligent Preacher that the hearers cannot underſtand: they are not alwayes low in learning, that ſtoop to the capacity of their Auditors. Some ſay, that the life of Preaching lies in the application; and here indeed he was ever moſt lively, in admonitions and exhortations; he was ſo affectionate as he would not *impart the Goſpel only*, but *his very ſoul alſo* to his Auditory. He was called the ſearching Preacher. This I have obſerved, that in every Sermon he would ſpeak ſomething ſtill by way of Tryal and Examination, ever and anon he would have his markes of diſtinction betwixt the precious and the vile, the ſincere perſon and the Hypocrite. This ſtory he tells himſelf, *That having a ſuſpition of one man in his pariſh, who made a great profeſſion of Religion, and often thinking of him in his diſtinctions; that very perſon afterwards came to him, and ſayd, You will never leave diſtinguiſhing, till you diſtinguiſh me into Hell.* I have related already how ſucceſsful and acceptable.

Aug. de doct. Chr. l. 4. c. 17.

1 Theſ. 2. 8.

ceptable his Miniſtry was where ever he came, onely here give me leave to inſert one paſſage.

The Doctor Preaching once at *Warborough* not far from *Oxford*, one in the Congregation was ſo affected with his firſt Prayer, that he ran to his houſe (which was near) and told his wife, that ſhe ſhould make her ready and come to Church, for there was one in the Pulpit that prayed like an Angel, ſo as he never heard the like. The woman haſtned away with her husband; and God ſo ordered it, that that Sermon proved a means of her Converſion, and ſhe proved afterwards a ſerious and eminent Chriſtian.

4. *His familiarity with the Holy Scripture.*

He was familiarly acquainted with the Scriptures of the old and new Teſtament, *as Apollo he was mighty therein.* This is praiſe worthy in all Chriſtians, eſpecially Miniſters: his head was inſtead of a Concordance; I have wondred to ſee how readily he could turn to any Text. He greatly loved the word, and therefore could not eaſily forget it;

Bonus Textuarius eſt bonus Theologus.

he

he loved it more then maids do their ornaments, which continually run in their minds. The Teſtimonies of God *they were his delight*, and the *men of his councel*; he read and meditated therein night and day. Where-ever he went he carried the New Teſtament, or *Davids Pſalms*, along with him: the firſt thing he did in a morning was to read a portion of Scripture, which was matter of meditation and communication alſo all the day after. When he was to ſeek for matter of good diſcourſe (which was not often) or when no apt occaſion was offer'd otherwiſe, then you ſhould hear him ſpeak of ſome Scripture that he had read that morning, from which he would raiſe ſome uſefull obſervations, or propoſe ſome practical queſtions to the inſtruction of the Company. And at night when he went to bed, he would ſearch out ſome Scripture or other which ſuited his preſent thoughts,

Omnia quæ curant ſenes meminerunt, Ter.

Joſephus *ſayes, that the devout Jewes, if they were askt concerning any point in the law, they could anſwer it as readily as their own name. Pſ.* 119.24. *Aug. Ad Voluſian: Ep.* 1. *&* *Ep.* 3.

Juro tibi Petrache multo mihi chariores eſſe ſcripturas quam regnum; & ſi alterutro mihi carendum ſit æquanimius me Diademate quam ſcripturis carendum. Rob. R. Sicil.

thoughts, and that was the ſubject or matter of his meditation in his waking houres. He ſeldome wrote any letter but he added three or four or more Scriptures for a Poſtſcript, and thoſe very pertinent either to the occaſion of his writing, or the condition of the perſon to whom he wrote; or it may be they ſhould reſpect the times, and the providences of God therein. How many letters have I received from him ſubſcribed in that manner. He ſelſome viſited or met any friend, but he would at parting leave ſome Scripture or other with him: Pray he would ſay, let me leave one Text of Scripture with you, and thinke of it when I am gone.

5. His giving himſelf to Prayer.

Pſ. 109. 4. *Ego oratio ve. Tig. vir orationis eram. Pagn.*

He was the moſt praying Chriſtian that ever I was acquainted with. What *David* ſaid of himſelf, may be affirmed of him, that he *gave himſelf to prayer.* One ſayes of *Luther*, that no day paſt

Vitus Theodor. *Once it fell out, ſayes he, I over-heard him, but good God, with what a ſpirit? what a confidence was in his expreſſions: with ſuch a reverence he ſued as one begging of God, and yet with ſuch hope and aſſurance, as if he ſpake to a loving father or friend.*

wherein

wherein he did not ſpend three houres at leaſt in this duty. I can't aſſert ſo much of this reverend perſon: but this I dare averr, that no day paſt wherein he reſtrained it, or ſlightly paſt it over. His manner was, when ever he came to lodge at any friends houſe, after he had ſaluted thoſe that were in his way, immediately to betake himſelf to his Chamber, where he would ſpend an houre (more or leſs) by himſelf, before any friend could ſpeak with him. At night again he would be ſhut up in his Chamber a conſiderable time before any ſervant could be admitted. He would often ſay to his Godly friends that came to viſit him, Come, muſt not we pray together before we part? indeed it may be ſaid of him what was ſaid of another, that prayer was his repaſt. Nor did he ſlubber over this duty as many doe, but he did it with all his might, he prayed in prayer, he wreſtled with God as our Father *Jacob* did, and he wept for the moſt part when he made his ſupplication to him. He was not onely affectionate in prayer with others, but when he was alone by himſelf.

Joach. Pa. Virg. Mar. *Mihi cibus et potus eſt oratio.*

ſelf. This paſſage I find under his own hand, [*The Glory be Gods*] *where I have ſhed one tear in prayer with others, I have* (*I think I ſpeak within compaſs*) *ſhed two in ſecret betwixt God and mine own ſoul.* One thing I had almoſt let ſlip, that in prayer alone or with others, if he could have room he would perform the duty kneeling on the ground, yea though ſometimes he was almoſt loſt in the croud by ſo doing; he would ſay, the humbleſt geſture, as well as ſpirit, became the duty of prayer, and that he knew no way of wreſtling with the Almighty, like that of lying at his feet, and proſtrating our ſelves before him.

Of old, when the queſtion was propounded, Servaſti Dominicum? *the anſwer was,* Chriſtianus ſum, intermittere non poſſum.

6. His Sanctification on the Lords Day, the Chriſtian Sabbath.

He was a ſtrict obſerver of the Lords day; and indeed he is no true Chriſtian that is careleſs therein. Some have obſerved, that the Sanctification of the Sabbath is one of the firſt things a converted perſon makes conſcience of; this good man was every day watchful over his thoughts, words and actions, but on this day more eſpecially. It was rare to hear him ſpeak one idle word, or ſee him

him do one unneceſſary action on the Sabbath day. His ſtrictneſs was ſuch herein, that ſome have wondred at it; and ſome (too haſtily) have cenſur'd him for it. I can remember, I have kept ſome Sabbaths with him, but alas I could by no means keep pace with him; he went from duty to duty (as Bees doe from Flower to Flower) from publique duty to family duties, from family duties to cloſet duties, finding ſweetneſs in them all; he would ſay, we muſt alwayes be good husbands of time, eſpecially of holy time; we muſt not ſpend that time, which is not our own, about our own things.

The Jewiſh Talmud propoſeth this queſtion, why God made man on the Sabbath Eve? and gives this anſwer, that he might preſently enter upon the ſanctification of the Sabbath, and begin his life with that work which was the main end of it.

7. *His keeping dayes of prayer and faſting alone and with his Family.* *Ne.* 1.4. *Dan.*9.3. 2 *Sa.*12. 16. *Eſt.* 4.16. *Mat.*18. 19.20. v. Clarks *Marrow of Eccl. Hiſtory* p.932.

He accuſtomed himſelf to keep private faſts; a practiſe out of uſe amongſt Chriſtians, though much commended in the Scriptures. This good man ſometimes by himſelf alone, and ſometimes with his little family, kept many whole dayes of prayer and humiliation. This he did ordinarily before the Lords Supper;

per; and often, as he found any corruption to grow or get head in his heart. There are ſome devils and devilliſh luſts that will be caſt out or kept under no other way.

This particular experience he himſelf records, That when he was a young Preacher, he found himſelf very prone to be puffed up and exalted (and indeed it was a common ſaying with him, that Spiritual pride is the ſpecial ſin of young Miniſters) whereupon he ſet apart a day to ſeek God for ſtrength againſt that ſin, and from that day forward he felt ('tis his own expreſſion) the neck and heart of it was broken.

1 Pet. 5. 5. *Fuit in honore ſine tumore, in elatione ſine prælatione.* Bernard. *Clem. de correct. Eccl. Stat. c. 22. Aug. de civit. Dei V. 14. c. 13.*

And to ſpeak truth (which might have been another head) he was a moſt lowly minded Chriſtian. He was clothed all over with humility, that Treaſury of grace; that ornament of Religion; neither his Parentage, nor his parts, nor his applauſe, nor any thing elſe did, to appearance, any way elate or puff him up; though he was lifted up in the eyes and hearts of others, yet he was lowly

lowly in his own: how often have I known him to esteem others, that were abundantly worse, to be better then himself. His carriage was a Comment on *Rom.* 12. 10.

8. *His great Bounty and liberality.*

He was very charitable to all men, especially to those of the houshold of Faith. 'Tis *Davids* character of a good man, that he he giveth to the poor and disperseth liberally; and this was his practise: whilst others were for gathering and heaping up, he was for dispersing and scattering abroad. As all graces were conspicuous in him, so this of charity in particular, which is the only grace (as one sayes) wherein God and man communicate. He devised liberal things, and *drew out his soule to the hungry*; he did not only draw out his purse to supply them, but his bowels and soul to pity them.

Ps. 112. 5. 9. *Verbum professionem importat.* Muis.

Synes. Ep. 57. *Is.* 58. 10.

His manner was, when he rode abroad, to put so much mony in his pocket as he could well spare for this purpose; and as he met with any indigent persons, he would fall in-

Dando pauperi das tibi, quia quod pauperi non dederis habebit alter, tu solum quod pauperi dederis. Chrysol: Serm. 41. *p.* 108.

to

'Tis related of Mr. Fox, *that he never refuſed to give to any one that askt him an Almes for Chriſts ſake: and being askt if he knew ſuch a poor perſon as was naim'd to him; Yea, ſaid he, I forget Lords and Ladies to remember ſuch.*

'Tis ſaid of Cyprian, *that he never turn'd away a widdow empty. He was wont to ſay, Ne dormiat in theſauris tuis quod pauperi prodeſſe poteſt. And again. Aliquando de neceſſitate amittendum eſt, quod ſponte pro divina remuneratione diſtribuendum eſt.*

to diſcourſe with them, and if he found any knowledge of God or ſavour of Godlineſs in them; he would the more plentifully relieve them; nor ſhould the ignorant if he judg'd them neceſſitous, and not idle, part from him without ſome counſel and reliefe. For purſe almes, and ſpiritual almes together, I never knew his fellow. He would often viſit poor and needy families, or call in as he paſt by them, and ever leave ſomewhat behind him for the good of ſoul and body both. God lent him a competent eſtate, and (which is better) gave him a heart to lend it back again unto him. God honoured him, and he again honoured God with his ſubſtance.

9. *His*

9. *His great patience and cheerfulneſs under afflictions.*

You have heard of the patience of *Job:* And I would acquaint you a little with the patience of this eminent ſervant of God. Thoſe that knew his circumſtances and his lamblike carriage under them, will readily graunt that he was one of the greateſt patterns of patience that this age hath produc't. Amongſt the various tryals wherewith he was exercis'd, he had one which was not ordinary, and which for ſome reaſons I conceale (though all that were of his intimate acquaintance do eaſily gueſs what I mean) yet whoever ſaw him out of humour? or ever heard a muttering or repining word to come out of his mouth? he made light of thoſe burthens which would have ſat or layn heavy on others backs. Yea many have admir'd, not only at his patience, but at his cheerfulneſs under his afflictions; he had learnt *in every thing to give thanks:* it may be ſaid of him as of that Apoſtle, that *he was joyful, yea, exceeding joyfull*

1. *Uxorem delirantem. Levamentum aliquod miſeriarum eſt non veniti. Lipſ. cent. 1. Ep. 61. Plut. conſolat. ad Apollon. p. 116. Gaudet patientia duris, Luc. li. 9.*

joyful in all his tribulations. His converſation was made up of ſerioufneſs temper'd with cheerfulneſs. How grave was he in all company, yet how pleaſant alſo. He deem'd, that a moroſe ſowr carriage in Chriſtians did much diſparage the Goſpel of Chriſt. 'I uſed my ſelf '(ſaith he, in his aforeſaid memoires) 'to be ſomewhat merry and cheerful in 'company, that ſtanders by might for 'that reaſon be the more in love with 'Religion to ſhew that it was not in-'conſiſtent with harmleſs merriment, 'and through mercy I have 'cauſe to think that I have 'ſometimes attained that 'end. I have drawn others 'by this means to a likeing 'of the good wayes of God.

Suidas *ſpeaking of* Macarius *relates, how by his pleaſant diſcourſes on all occaſions he drew many into the wayes of God.*

10. *His moderation and peaceableneſs.*

He much diſlikt and lamented the unnatural heats and diviſions amongſt Chriſtians. He was not ſceptical and indifferent, nor was he ſevere and rigid. He ſeem'd to me to tread in *Pauls* ſteps, and

1 *Cor.* 9. 19.

and did alwayes endeavour to accommodate himſelf to thoſe that differed from him ſo far as lawfully he could, and as his love of Truth would permit. Many men prefer a petty Notion to the Churches peace and communion, and are ſo capricious and overconfident of their own determinations, That they will hold no communion, nay, hardly have a pleaſing converſation with thoſe who are not of their perſuaſion; he was of a more excellent temper, he would ſay, *All men muſt have their grains of allowance; the moſt knowing Chriſtians know but in part.* He would familiarly converſe, (ay, and if occaſion were, in all Ordinances communicate) with thoſe that *held the head*, and were ſound in the vitals of Chriſtian Religion, though in other things they were erroneous. This one thing he would greatly declaim againſt, That Chriſtians upon every little occaſion, made nothing of Separation; if they diſlik't a people, the next word is, We'll join with them no longer; if they diſlik't a Preacher,

Vide *Hier. Zanch.* de Eccleſia. & de quinque cauſis quas Schiſmatici obtendunt, cum ab Eccleſiæ communione deficiunt.

this follow'd next, We'll hear him no more. His opinion was (to which I ſubſcribe) That it will never be well with the Church of God in this Nation, ſo long as Chriſtians are ſo prone to diviſion and ſeparation. This, this is *Englands* incurable Wound.

II. *His Zeal for God.*

What was ſaid of *David*, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, the ſame may be affirm'd of him, *The zeal of God did conſume and eat him up.* Though he ſeldom ſinn'd in being angry, yet he often, very often, was angry with ſin. He could bear to be reproach't, and evil-ſpoken of himſelf, but not that God and his Name ſhould be blaſphem'd and diſhonour'd: of this, I could give many inſtances, take one or two under his own hand. *Being once*, ſayes he, *at a Wedding dinner, at the Marriage of one Mr.* Valentine's *Servant, I obſerv'd a Fidler to ſwear and ſing very obſcenely, at which*

John 2. 17. Pſal. 69. 19. & 119. 139. Me zelus meus, & cruciavit. egregiè vim exprimit zeli perquem cor vellicatur & lancinatur. *Mun.*

What is ſaid of another, may be alſo affirmed of him, That he was kin to Angels, who are active ſpirits, and a flaming fire.

I was troubled and filled with indignation, till anon I call'd to him to forbear, and gave him money to hold his peace, tendring therein the glory of God, and was much comforted thereby.

Supping once at an Inn, betwixt Oxford *and* London, *where many who Travell'd together, did also eat together, one amongst the rest was full of vain and prophane discourse. I applied my self to him, and laboured to convince him of the evil of sin, and of the curse and heavy wrath of God which hung over his head: And then I told him also of the riches of Gods grace to repenting sinners, of his readiness to receive them, and be reconciled to them. This made him more mute, but what farther operation it had upon him, I know not; only this was remarkable, that the opening of the grace of God in the Gospel, fell upon a young Scholar that stood by, and (as he afterwards confest) it melted his very heart, and help't him from under a spirit of bondage wherewith he had been bow'd down, and broken, for many Months past.*

Another demonstration of his great zeal for God, was his frequent pro-

jecting and contriving how he might promote his honour and ſervice in the World. How often hath he been heard to ſay in a Morning to his Friend or Friends, Come, What ſhall we do for God this day? How ſhall we Trade with our Talents for the furtherance of his glory? Never did any ambitious man more ſtudy the advancing of himſelf, than he did the advancing the Name and Honour of his God.

* Tis recorded of Mr. *Joſeph Alleine*, That he never aroſe in the morning without ſome heavenly deſign of promoting Gods glory, and the good of Souls, accounting it a ſhame, that the Covetous ſhould ariſe with ſuch anxious projects of compaſſing his deſired wealth, the Ambitious his aiery honours and grandeur, the Voluptuous his fickly pleaſures, and that the Religious man, who hath ſo glorious a Prize and Trophies before his eyes, ſhould be a man of no projects and deſigns. *Hiſtory of his Life.* p. 119.

12. *His dexterity and delight in Chriſtian conference.*

In this he excell'd, and for this excellency alone, he deſerves to be Chronicled and Recorded to all Poſterity: if he came behind ſome in Learning, Elocution, *&c.* yet he went before all men that ever I knew in this grace or gift.

gift. We make often mention of a gift of Prayer, and of a gift of Preaching, and I am ſatisfi'd that there is a gift of Conference, of godly and chriſtian Conference, and I believe that he was endued with it, above any in this Age. As men have their particular ſins, ſo they have their particular graces, and excellencies; *Abraham* excell'd in Faith, *Moſes* in Meekneſs, *Job* in Patience, and this good man in godly Conference. Who ever convers'd with him, and did not hear ſome profitable Diſcourſe proceed from him? his *ſpeech was alwayes with grace*, as it argu'd grace in the ſpeaker, ſo it was apt to work grace in the hearer: it was ever ſavoury, *ſeaſon'd with ſalt, and good to the uſe of edifying.* His *heart* was alwayes *enditing a good matter*, and *his tongue* was *as the pen of a ready writer.* *His lips fed many*, and did alwayes *drop as the honey-comb*, *grace was poured into them*, and it flow'd very plentifully from them. He had a good ſtock and *treaſure in his heart*, and from thence upon every occaſion *he brought forth things new and old.*

Eph. 4. 29.

Pſal. 45. 1, 2. Prov. 10. 21. Cant. 4. 11.

Many have admired his skill and readineſs this way, who will never be able to imitate it. One would wonder when he ſate at meat with his Friends, how dexterouſly he would turn Water into Wine. I mean, their merry and idle, into ſerious and uſeful Diſcourſe. When any were talking of their worldly and ſecular Affairs, he had a faculty of faſtning, or hitching on ſome heavenly Argument, which he did ſo handſomly, that the moſt ignorant and carnal amongſt them could not be offended at it; thoſe that would nauſeate ſuch Diſcourſe in others, would yet accept it from him, ſo cleanly and artificially did he manage it. He had a very good hand at *warning the unruly*, and at *comforting the feeble-minded*; but he was wondrouſly ready *at inſtructing the ignorant*, ſuch as others would ſlight, and not think worthy of their pains, by reaſon of their meanneſs and ignorance; he would delight in converſing with them, and inſtructing of them; *their Souls*, he would ſay, *are as precious as the Souls of Nobles.*

When

When he accidentally met with any perſon, though a ſtranger, as he was ſitting in a houſe, or walking or riding by the way, he would inſtantly apply to him, and fall into diſcourſe with him: not long before his death, I went with him to a Gentleman's houſe, where ſitting down, he preſently ask't the ſervant that attended, What Countreyman he was? and where he was born? to which the young man no ſooner replied, but his next queſtion was, I prethee tell me, doſt thou think thou art born again? and by that handle or introduction, he took occaſion to open to him (as Chriſt did to *Nicodemus*) the nature and neceſſity of the new birth. His ſucceſs in this way, was ſomething anſwerable to his diligence, ſome having been converted, others, (and thoſe not a few) inſtructed, comforted, and quickned by his godly diſcourſe.

Converſion work hath been much promoted by occaſional ſpeeches. A Maid dwelling in a religious Family, was told by a Miniſter, That if ſhe went to Hell out of that Family, ſhe would have a deep place there. This ſtartled her, and ſhe became afterwards a Serious Chriſtian.

A Miniſter riding one morning to a Lecture, met with ſome young men carrying their Cocks to a Cock fight, he ſpake to one of them, and ſaid, *Friend our Lord and Maſter Jeſus Chriſt never came into the world to ſet up ſuch Sports as theſe.* This ſaying (though the young man went on to his ſport that day) ſtuck like an arrow in his liver, and he could not be at quiet, till he had learned who this Miniſter was, and afterwards gain'd acquaintance with

with him, and thereupon laid these, and his other sinnes to heart, and made a happy Change of his sinful courses. *Machin.* in vita ejus. p. 82.

His modesty was such, that he never judged any thing he did worthy of the Press, yet he consented that his Treatise of *Christian Conference* should be Printed, and accordingly 'tis annexed to this Narrative. The Reader will find it, though a plain, yet a profitable discourse. Having also by me a Manuscript of his, of a Dialogue betwixt a Minister and a Stranger, I thought good to Print it with the aforesaid Treatise, which may serve for a *specimen* of the practice therein urg'd and commended.

Omne tempus Clodios non omne Catones parit. *Senec. Ep.*

Tit. 2, 7. Περὶ πάντα σεαυτὸν παρεχόμενος τύπον καλῶν ἔργων ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ Ἀδιαφθορίαν, σεμνότητα λόγον ὑγιῆ, ἀκατάγνωστον. The word SINCERITY, which is read in our Translation, is not found in the Greek Text. Qu. How, or why it was added?

Thus I have set before the World one of the fairest Copies that this Age hath produc't: A man that was (as the Apostle exhorteth *Titus* to be) *a pattern of good works*; one that *in doctrine shew'd uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that could not be condemned*: One that *in conversation shew'd integrity, unblameableness*, and *good works*, that ought to be imitated. A few more such Ministers and Christians would convince,

vince, yea, condemn the ungodly generation amongſt whom we dwell, and make them of another mind, who ſay and think, That all Profeſſors are but Pretenders to Religion, and that there is no ſuch thing as grace or godlineſs, diſtinct from moral vertue and righteouſneſs, there is no more ready way to refel ſuch Calumnies, than to refer them to the converſation of ſuch a perſon as I have here deſcrib'd, as *Diogenes* confuted one that denied there was any motion, by riſing up, and walking before his eyes.

Diog. Laert. l. 6. p. 212.

To conclude, my heart's deſire and earneſt prayer is this, That God would uſe this Narrative for the doing ſome good in the World, that thoſe who wont be guided by Rules and Precepts, may be a little mov'd by this holy man's example and practice: how many are infected by the vices of good men, and why may not others be attracted by their graces? Reader, whoever thou art that peruſeſt theſe Lines, I ſhall only ſay to thee, as Chriſt to that Lawyer, *Luke* 10.37. *Go thou and do likewiſe.* He

Vivitur magis ad ſimilitudinem, quam ad rationem. *Sen. de vit. beat.* c. 1. Vide etiam *Sen. Ep.* 123. Ad rationem vitæ exemplis erudimur. *Plin.* l. 8. Ep. 18.

He lies Interred in the Parish-Church of Bovingdon aforesaid, under a fair Stone, with this Epitaph ingraven upon it, made by the Reverend Doctor Simon Ford.

IN MEMORIAM

Eruditi & Sanctissimi Viri

EDMUNDI STAUNTON

S. T. D.

Qui annum agens Septuagesimum primum Decimo quarto die *Julii* Anno Domini 1671. Spiritum ejus in manus Domini Jesu Christi summa pace deposuit.

Scire cupis, Lector, cujus lapis iste sepulti est?
En lege, summissa, sed lege, voce precor.
Se solum nota latuit pietate modestus,
Erubuitque suis conscius esse bonis.
Unde hæc, vera licet, si norit forte, verendum
Ne fugiat marmor, vel cinis ipse loquax.

In virum Reverendissimum *Edmundum Staunton* S. T. D. C.C.C. Oxonienſ. Præſidem (non ita pridem) Digniſſimum. *Acroſticum.*

Ecce virum Cœlo dignum, dignante Jehova!
Dux erat ille Gregis, Rector Paſtorque probatus.
Ille Patrem *hunc animæ poterant dictare bea-*
Virtutum centrum dulci fulgore coruſcans, [*tum:*
Non parcum Chriſto tot conſignare labores
Doctis atque piis quam ſuavi melle fluentes!
Victor jam lætus cum Jeſu mente triumphat,
Surſum corde ſequi, nos parvos integer urgens
Sin dicas, deſum-vires quis ſuppetat unde
Talia cœlicolæ veſtigia tangere poſſem?
Aſpice de cœlo Chriſti manus Omnipotentis
Victrix, qua fretus nil non te poſſe putandum.
Nil ultra objicias, audi, vide, tangeto facta
Itanis clare, radios ſpargentis amicos
Orbi Chriſticolæ hoc obſtetricante libello.
Nec ſit qui maculas auſit conſpergere nigras.

J. B.

EDMUNDUS STAUNTON.

ANAGRAMMA:

Non adeſt ut mundus.

NOn ut mundus adeſt nobis; *hæc infima ſpernit*
Non ut mundus abeſt, *qui perit abſque mora*
Mundus abeſt præſens, abſens *at* adeſt μακάριτης
Staunton, *quem nobis reddit amica fides.*

Idem.

In obitum Reverendi admodum *Edmundi Staunton* S. T. D. Collegii Corporis Chriſti apud *Oxonienſes* quondam Præſidis.

HEroas nimium feſtina morte peremptos
Mæſtaque, tu Vatum funera, dulce caput,
Excipis (heu) dura fati conſtrictus eadem
Lege: illam Plutus *quando refiget atrox?*
In genus humanum quando feritate remota
Miteſcet demum poſt ſpolia ampla *ſatis?*

Si

Si quid apud parcas, *valuiſſet candor honeſtus*,
Inſignis nec non intemerata fides;
Flectere ſi poſſent maleſanas ulla ſorores
Quæ vel ſuſpiciant, quæve ſtupere ſolent
Mortales, hodie nos te poteremur, Amice;
Agmine cultorum cinctus & ipſe fores.
Aſt quicquid pulchrum terrarum ubicunq; revidet,
Quicquid magnificum perſonat, atque plebi
Exemptum, ſtatim mala ſurripit Atropos. *Orbem*
Nempe premit virtus, obruit ipſa, ſuæ
Diſpergit radios dum majeſtatis onuſtos.
Ito, Phile, *ac inter ſydera quære locum*;
Machina terreſtris te longe indigna, reducat
Saturnus *terris* aurea ſecla *licet.*

Planxit *Jonathan. Tuckney* Cantabrigienſis A. M. Coll. S. Joann. Evangeliſtæ nuper Soc.

In Reverendiſſimum digniſſimumque Virum *Edmundum Stantonem*, S. T. D. & Herculeum quondam doctiſſimi *Calvini* Propugnatorem.

Tu bene legiſti Calvinum, *vera docentem*;
Tu bene cepiſti candida ſenſa viri:
Dum blaterent Hoſtes, Blaſphemum & figere ſcriptis
Peccata Autori peſſima quæque Deo.
Hos debellaſti, faſtu quam felle tumentes,
Frendebant luctu; *riſit at* Oxonium:
Oſcula multa dedit plaudens Academia; *Cœlo*
Calvinus *Tibi nunc Oſcula multa dedit.*
Vivite Conſortes, Paradiſo vivite juncti;
Nam ſtudiis, animis, & pietate pares.

Ben. Agas.

A brief Relation (chiefly) of his great care to promote Religion, and Learning, in the College of which he was Preſident. By Mr. J. M. Sometime Fellow of the ſame.

IT was a great commendation which *Poggius* the *Florentine*, though a *Papiſt*, gave the Renowned *Hierome* of *Prague*; when (obſerving the great Learning, Eloquence, and Chriſtian fortitude which he manifeſted at the Council of *Conſtance*) he proclaimed him to be *a man worthy to be had in perpetual remembrance*.

O virum dignum memoria hominum ſempiterna! Æn. Silv. Hiſt. Bohem. cap. 36.

There are, no doubt, many thouſands in this *Nation*, who having had perſonal knowledge of the worthy man, Dr. *Edmund Staunton*, will remember him while they live, and vocally tranſmit the memory of his name, as precious to Poſterity. And ſome of them, who have often ſmelt the *odour* of his *ointment* (for he was anointed with ſome gifts and graces above many of his Brethren) have ſpread abroad the *ſavour* of it, by declaring what an *excellent ſpirit was found in him*; chiefly, that men might utter the memory of *Gods great goodneſs* to him, and to his Church in him; as alſo, that ſuch as never knew him, might, by beholding his *Portraicture* drawn (though, it may be, not to the life) be brought, by his example, to ſome conformity to that holineſs which did ſhine forth in him: and, laſtly, that ſo worthy a perſon might have the honour which is his due, and which the Lord alloweth to be paid to his faithful ſervants.

Pſal. 112. 6.

I alſo, who had the happineſs to be near

near him for many years, and obſerved the excellent workings of the grace of God in him, cannot but ſpeak of the things which I have ſeen and heard.

He was, in his younger years, choſen Scholar of *Corpus Chriſti College* in *Oxford*, and, not long after, *Probationer Fellow* of the ſame, *viz.* before he came to be Batchelor of Arts, a thing ſeldom known in that houſe. There *Men*, finding him to be not only *Ingenious*, but *Ingenuous* alſo, did ſhew him great reſpect, beſtowing one token thereof after another: And there *God*, not for any *deſert* in him, but out of his *own mercy, and grace*, did ſet his eye upon him; there did the *kindneſs, and love of God* (which a great while before had run, *like water*, under ground) break forth and *appear*, *Saving him by the waſhing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.*

Ingeniosus. Ingenuus.

Tit. 3. 5.

In *Corpus Chriſti College* (as he told me) it pleaſed the Lord (firſt) to open [redacted] eyes, cauſing him to ſee his

wretched condition, which did *greatly*, and *deeply* humble him, and made him *put up ſtrong cryes, with tears, to him that was able to ſave him from death,* Hebr. 5. 7. *and was heard in that he feared:* for at length he had his Conſcience ſprinkled with the *blood* of Chriſt, by whom he received the *atonement*; and *the law* Rom 8. 2. *of the Spirit of life, in Chriſt Jeſus, made him free from the law of ſin, and death.*

And now he became a Member of the moſt ancient, honourable, and durable *Society* in the world; being firſt choſen, and then admitted *Fellow* of *Sion College*, where an innumerable Hebr. 12. company of *Saints*, and *Angels*, were 22. his *Collegues*. Having received this grace, he found himſelf ſtrongly inclined to make others partakers of the ſame.

Wherefore, having taken his degree of *Maſter of Arts*, after ſome few Years, he left the *College*, and addicted himſelf to the work of the *Miniſtry*.

He

He ſpent moſt of his time and labours at *Kingſton* upon *Thames*, where *the pleaſure of the Lord did proſper in his hands:* From thence he was called, in the time of the late Troubles, to take upon him the government of the *College*, of which he had been before a Member.

As ſoon as he came upon the place, he manifeſted an earneſt deſire after the welfare of the *Society*, in every reſpect, exciting, and, by his example, leading ſuch as were to aſſiſt him to endeavour the ſame.

His Government ſavoured more of *lenity* and mildneſs, than of *ſharpneſs* and ſeverity; yet he kept the College in very good Order and Diſcipline. Though the Houſe, before his time, had been much troubled with diviſions, he, by his *moderation*, and *Chriſtian prudence*, kept them all of a piece, and in the enjoyment of great peace and concord.

He was, indeed, naturally, of an exceeding good *temper*, and *diſpoſition*; gentle, affable, and courteous to all, which, being *embelliſhed with grace*, made him exceeding *amiable*, and very *uſeful* in all his converſation.

His great care was to promote *Religion*, and *Learning* in the *College*, which he did with both his hands earneſtly. *Divine* knowledge, and *Humane* Learning, are the *right*, and *left* eye of the World; as the *Sun* and *Moon* are to the *Univerſe*, the eclipſing of either of them, leaves the World in darkneſs. One thing there was that made him, the more deſire to ſee Religion and Learning meet together, *in conjunction*, in all ſuch as were to be choſen Scholars of the Houſe; or, if that could not be obtained, to have them joined together afterward. It was the *Founders* Will, expreſſed in one of his *Statutes*, That all the Fellows, and Scholars of the *Foundation*, ſhould, about a year, or two, after they became *Maſters of Arts*, be ordained

to

to the *Holy Miniſtry*; one only excepted, who, *ad arbitrium*, might be deputed to the ſtudy, and practice of *Phyſick*. Parts, and Learning, without grace, make a man capable of doing very good ſervice in the *Commonwealth*; but both in conjunction, are more requiſite in one, who is *to make manifeſt the ſavour of the knowledge of Chriſt in every place*, 2 Cor. 2. 14. *Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth*, 1 Cor. 8. 1. A man of Learning without grace, is like a ſhip without *ballaſt*, the leaſt blaſt of applauſe is ready to drive him upon the Quick-ſands of Pride, or carry him on the Rocks of oppoſition to others, and ſometimes to the truth it ſelf, to his own great danger, if not ruine; and the prejudice of others. If ſuch a man ſee another not to ſail altogether by his *Compaſs*, but to be carried by a ſide-wind, to ſome diſtance from his judgment, he finds it a hard matter to forbear making up to him, and can ſcarce hold his hands from letting flie at him.

Alludit ad Sacerdotum unctionem, & Sacrificiorum ſuffitus. *Junius* in locum.

Difficile eſt Satyras non ſcribere.

Hence have flown thoſe great heats, Animoſities, and *perverſe Diſputings*, which have ſo much troubled the Church of God. Unſanctified Parts and Learning have been the *ſharpeſt Tools*, that the great Adverſary of Mankind, and of the Church eſpecially, could ever lay hold on to do *miſchief* withall; as the Hiſtories of all Ages do abundantly teſtifie.

Upon ſuch accounts as theſe, this godly wiſe man was careful to prevent (if it might be) an error in the firſt concoction, knowing how hard it might prove to amend it in the ſecond.

Therefore, when any Scholars place became void, if there appeared many *Candidates* for it, he appointed them ſome time before the Election, to attend him at his Lodgings, where he examined them privately, and ſet down in a Paper the age, ſtanding, and proficier-

ficiency in learning of every one of them: He noted alſo, what Teſtimonials he had received from perſons of *Integrity*, concerning the good converſation of any of them, and their hopefulneſs as to *Godlineſs*; with his own apprehenſions about them, upon his examination, as to that matter alſo.

And if ſuch a number of the Electors as was requiſite, could not, after publick examination, agree upon one of them; he, upon whom the election was, in that caſe, devolved; if there appeared to him an equality, or near an equality in other reſpects, would alwayes let Piety have the honour to turn the ſcale.

His next care was to have theſe *Twins parts*, and *Piety* foſtered, and cheriſhed, and by all wayes and means improved, and heightned to the utmoſt of his power. To this purpoſe, he came, ordinarily, to all *College* Exerciſes, held every one to the duties of their ſeveral places; and obſerved every

every ones growth, and progreſs in Learning; by which he was the better able to judge whom to prefer, when any of them came to be Competitors for a *Fellowſhip*.

He was no leſs careful to ſee *Religion* thrive, and proſper among them: For firſt, he made choice of the fitteſt perſons he could find, to perform the duty of Prayer Morning and Evening, ſuch as might, with *reverence*, *ſeriouſneſs*, and *warm affection*, engage the hearts of others in the duty.

At this holy exerciſe he was preſent himſelf, as conſtantly, if not more conſtantly than the younger *Scholars*, as to join in the duty, to bring down a bleſſing from above upon them, and their ſtudies; ſo, to ſee it reverently performed, and that the *whole Society* came duly together.

Every Lords day in the Evening, when the whole Houſe met to offer up their *Sacrifice of praiſe, and prayer*, he

he examined the younger ſort, calling them to account about what they had heard that day; which was a likely means to engage them to the greater attention in hearing, and to make the truths, by their pondering them, ſink the deeper into their hearts.

He took great pains to inſtruct them of the lower rank in the grounds of *Religion*, calling them one day in the Week into the *Chappel*; where he opened, and explained the great, and *weighty Truths of Chriſtianity* to them; endeavouring ſtill, not only to inform their *judgments*, but to make the truths reach their *hearts*.

Whereas, the *Founder* required, that the *Fellows*, and *Scholars* ſhould, at ſuch a ſtanding (as was ſaid before) be ordained to the *Miniſtry*; he, with the conſent of ſuch of the *Fellows* as were impowered by *Statute* to make orders for the good of the Society, decreed, That all of ſuch a ſtanding, or above, ſhould

ſhould preach every Lords day in the morning, by courſe, in the *College Chappel*, before the publick Sermon in the *Univerſity*.

By this means, they, who were deſigned for the Work of the Miniſtry, might, firſt, *prove*, and *improve* their own abilities. And ſecondly, *approve* themſelves to others, to be men *apt to teach*, which is one of the qualifications required in the *Apoſtolical Canons* in them that are to be called to the Paſtoral office.

Fifthly and laſtly, beſides the *Conference* which he had often in his own Lodgings about Soul-matters, and *Communion* in the Lords Supper, in the *College Chappel*, where he himſelf did adminiſter, and many of the Houſe, with others from abroad were partakers; he was often diſcourſing, with ſuch of the Society as came to him about any buſineſs, in ſuch a manner as tended to the *promoting of Holineſs*; for he ſeldom let them depart without ſome in-

inſtruction, admonition, or hearty counſel.

They eſpecially, who, by reaſon of their place and ſtanding, were moſt about him, received great benefit by converſing with him; *For his heart taught his mouth, and added learning to his lips.* When a portion of the Scripture was read, at Dinner (as is uſual) he did not only cauſe *altum ſilentium*, and reverent attention through the Hall, that all might feed their *Souls*, while they were feeding their *Bodies*; but, the Chapter ended, if there were any difficult places in it, he either propounded them to the *Fellows* that ſate at the Table with him, to be unfolded by them, or elſe opened, and unfolded them himſelf; if it contained practical matter, it was a pleaſant thing to ſee, and hear, how he, who applied his heart to the knowledge of God, and kept his words and Laws within him, *had them withall fitted in his lips.*

He lived to ſee ſome fruit of his Labours,

Labours, to his great joy and contentment; for a competent number of them, who were educated, *ab origine*, under his care, became Learned, well-diſpoſed, and pious men. I cannot refrain, but muſt mention one of them, *viz.* Mr. *Joſeph Alleine*, late Miniſter of the Goſpel at *Taunton* in *Somerſetſhire*; for as he was a great comfort to this holy man, while he continued in the *College*; ſo it did revive him to hear (for he was often enquiring after ſuch as had been of his Houſe, *as a father after his children*) that he proved ſo eminently pious, and uſeful a man in the Church of God.

But, had he lived to ſee the Relation of his Life, now publiſhed ſince his Death, he would have fallen into an *extaſie* of joy: And I have ſo much charity for ſome, that were inſtrumental about his great Sufferings, and often Impriſonments, as to believe, that if they would pleaſe to read the Relation aforeſaid, wherein both *Conformiſts* and *Nonconformiſts* agree to give him

an

an high teſtimony for his great parts, Learning, peaceable ſpirit, quiet deportment, zeal of the right kind, with ardent love to God, and man, extending to the worſt of his enemies, their hearts would ſmite them for giving ſo good a man ſo much trouble: however, he is, now, *where the weary are at reſt*, Job 3. 17.

We have ſeen how vigilant, and induſtrious a Governour this worthy man was in his *College*; he was alſo one, who, in compaſſion to mens ſouls, took every opportunity, when at home, to Preach in, or near the City.

One of the *Impropriations* belonging to the *College*, about ſeven Miles diſtant, having but a ſmall ſtipend, before his time, not ſufficient to afford a ſubſiſtence to an able man to labour, and watch among the people for the good of their ſouls; he firſt went *himſelf*, afterward he deſired ſome of the *Senior Fellows* to go over by courſe, and

and Preach unto the people; which desire of his they readily complied with, for some time, till the Lease of the *Impropriation* came to be renewed; when, upon the *Presidents* proposal, the *Fellows* consented either much to abate, or wholly remit the Fine; requiring, in lieu thereof, a competent Sum to be paid yearly, to encourage an able man to labour constantly among them.

When the Affairs of the *College* called him forth into places remote from the *University*, he was alwayes ready to take any opportunity to do good to the souls of men.

One who hath rode many hundred Miles in company with him, hath alwayes observed his deportment in all places, and toward all persons, to be such as became an heavenly minded *Christian*, and a true *Minister* of Christ.

Deut. 6. 7. When he was *riding on the way*, he enter-

entertained his company with heavenly discourse; and as variety of Objects did present themselves to him, he alwayes drew excellent matter out of them; glorifying God for the power, wisdom, and goodness which appeared in the Works of *Creation*, and *Providence*. Psal. 104. 24.

As he passed by such as were about their occasions in the *Fields*, he would many times make an halt, and enter into a short discourse with them: He would, first, ask them some ordinary question, such as Travellers use to ask, and then take an occasion, from their answer, to ask them other questions of more weight and concernment to their Souls; leaving alwayes some serious word with them, at parting, for them to *ruminate* upon: And I am persuaded, that there are many, who never saw his face, nor he theirs, but thus, *in transitu*, that have blest God for him.

When he came to his Lodging, ei-

ther in a publick or private houſe; as he had a better advantage there, ſo he conſtantly made good uſe of it, for the *glory* of *God*, and the *edification* of whatever company he was caſt upon.

He had an excellent gift, and rare faculty beyond what I did ever obſerve in any man beſide, to improve diſcourſe ſo as to make it, not only *pleaſant* to thoſe with whom he did converſe, but very *profitable* to their ſouls, aiming ſtill at the laſt, as the mark which he had conſtantly in his eye.

Χαρὶς, τὸ τ' ὠφέλιμον καὶ τὰ πολλὰ, χρεία.

When he came among perſons of *Quality* (being himſelf well born, well educated, of a generous ſpirit, and a chearful temper) his company, and converſe was, uſually, very *acceptable to them*, which gave him an advantage to tell them (as he would *plainly*, though *prudently*) of what he ſaw amiſs in them; to mind them of the vanity of the World, of better things above,

above, and to put them (as he often would) upon good deſigns, to ſhew their thankfulneſs to God for his mercy to them.

Nor was there a perſon ſo mean, but he could, and would readily, and humbly condeſcend to him, as knowing what precious ſouls dwell in the pooreſt *houſes of clay*.

He ſpake to ſuch alwayes in their own dialect, and in a phraſe they well underſtood; trying their knowledge, and feeling the pulſe of their ſouls: if he found them ignorant, or unſenſible, he would endeavour to awaken them, by laying plain Texts of Scripture before them, for their conviction.

If he met with humbled and burdened ſouls, or ſuch as were babes in Chriſt, he would gather them as *lambs* in his arms, and *gently* lead them to the *Wells of Salvation*.

If at any time there hapned to be a

mixt company at the Table with him, ſome ſerious Chriſtians, ſome Profeſſors at large, his manner was to be very free and pleaſant in diſcourſe with them, which cauſed them all to give great attention to him: then might you have ſeen, how, ever and anon, the honey dropt from his lips, while the company were hanging on them; how skilful he was in dividing the Word aright, to every one his portion; and how wiſe in winning of ſouls.

If he obſerved any to take the boldneſs, from his innocent mirth, and pleaſant humour, to incline to vain, and frothy diſcourſe, he would very dexterouſly turn to ſome more profitable matter, and, as occaſion was given, afford a ſerious reproof, tempered with much kindneſs and love to their ſouls, which was, uſually, well taken at his hand.

If his occaſions required his ſtay, a day or two, at any place, he ſeldom departed before he had Preached to the People. He

He found, by much and long experience, that a plain way of Preaching was moſt effectual to the ends for which that Ordinance was appointed; and therefore he conſtantly uſed it, even in the *College* and *Univerſity*; though he could eaſily have appeared in another ſtrain, had he preferred an aiery Reputation with ſome, before the Work of his Maſter, and the real advantage of others.

To conclude, I hope, that many, who ſome time were, and ſome, who yet are members of that Society, having felt his fatherly care, heard his ſound and pious inſtructions, and ſeen his godly examples, do, and will endeavour to hold a conformity thereunto: If any neglect, or deſpiſe them, let them know aſſuredly, that God will require it at their hands.

A Dialogue:

A Dialogue:

OR, A

DISCOURSE

BETWEEN A

Minister and a Stranger,

As they were

On the *High-way* together,

ABOUT

Soul Affairs.

By *Edmund Staunton* D. D.

LONDON,

Printed for *Tho: Parkhurſt*, and are to be Sold at the Bible and Three Crowns in *Cheapſide*, near *Mercers Chappel*: And at the Gilded Bible on *London-bridge*, under the Gate. 1673.

A Dialogue, or Diſcourſe between a Miniſter and a Stranger as they were on the High-way together.

Miniſter. FRiend, Good morrow to you: How far Travel you this way?

Stranger. *To ſuch or ſuch a place.*

Min. I ſhall be glad of your company.

Str. *And I Sir of yours.*

Min. Little thought you in the Morning of meeting me, or I of meeting you.

Str. *True Sir.*

Min. Well Friend, ſince by the Providence of God we are brought together, and muſt be accountable to God at death and judgment, how we ſpend our time whil'ſt we be together, ſhall we talk of what concerns the good

of our Souls, and of the Things of God?

Stranger. *Yes Sir, with all my heart, if you pleaſe.*

Miniſter. Friend, What think you then that your Soul is?

Str. *I think that my Soul is my breath, becauſe when a man's breath is gone, then he dyeth, and his Soul is gone alſo.*

Min. True, Friend, when the breath departeth, the Soul departeth alſo; yet the Soul of a man is not his breath, becauſe 1. Beaſts, and the Fowls of the Air breathe; alſo and yet you do not think they have reaſonable, immortal Souls, as we have: 2. Our breath is but the Air drawn in, and caſt out again; and can you reaſonably imagine, *firſt*, that the Air thus ſucked in, and blown out again, ſhould be the Soul or Souls of men? or, *ſecondly*, that the whole Region of the Air, ſhould be the rational and immortal Souls of men? or, *thirdly*, that our Souls come in and go out of our bodies, as the Air we breathe in doth?

Stranger.

Stranger. *Truly Sir, you have convinced me, that the Soul is not breath, whatever it be.*

Miniſter. What elſe do you think it is?

Str. *I think it is my blood, moſt likely.*

Not ſo, becauſe 1. Beaſts and Birds have blood in them, as well as Men, and yet you do not think they have reaſonable immortal Souls, as we Men have. 2. If our Souls were blood, then, when our Noſes bleed (to ſpeak familiarly with you) our Souls would even out at our Noſes; or when we cut our fingers, our Souls would run out at our fingers ends.

Min. Friend, gueſs once more what your Soul is.

Str. *Sir, Is it not my Conſcience?*

Min. No, Friend, the underſtanding, will, conſcience, and affections, as love, hatred, are the faculties and endowments of the Soul, but not the Soul it ſelf.

Str. *You ſay well Sir, I pray tell me then, what my Soul is.*

Miniſter. Friend (not to trouble you with any curious definitions) the Soul of man is a ſpiritual ſubſtance, endowed with reaſon, immortal, created, and infuſed into man, informeth, inliveneth the body, doth and acteth all in man; the Soul ſeeth in the eye, heareth in the ear, ſpeaketh in the tongue, *&c.* Zach. 12. 1. *God formeth the ſpirit of man within him.*

Stranger. *I thank you Sir, this is more than ever I heard of before.*

Min. Well Friend, having ſpoken ſomething concerning our Souls, ſhall we ſpeak a little concerning God?

Str. *Yes Sir, I like your talk very well.*

Min. What do you think God is? Is he an old man, or a young?

Str. *An old man ſurely, he hath been a long time.*

Min. No, God is neither a young man, nor an old man.

Str. *If God be not a man, why do the Scriptures ſpeak of God, as having eyes, ears, hands and feet,* &c?

Min. This kind of ſpeaking is not proper, but figurative, ſpeaking of God after the manner of men, ſtooping to our

our underſtandings and capacities: but the Scripture ſpeaking plainly and properly, ſaith, *God is a Spirit*, John 4. 24.

Stranger. *You ſay right Sir, God is a Spirit.*

Miniſter. Well Friend, Are not the Angels ſpirits too? *They are called miniſtring ſpirits*, Hebr. 1. 13. What then is the difference between God, and the Angels?

Str. *God is the greateſt and higheſt of all the Angels.*

Min. No Friend, God is not an Angel at all, God is a Spirit, uncreated, having his being of himſelf, infinite, and eternal; the Angels are creatures, were made by God, are finite, have a beginning, *Col.* 1. 16. *By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible, whether they be thrones and dominions, principalities, or powers*; all the Angels were made by God.

Str. *I believe Sir what you ſay, concerning God, and the Angels.*

Min. Where is God, think you?

Str. *Why God is in heaven.*

Miniſter. What, is God no where elſ but in heaven?

Stranger. *Yes, I hope he is in the hearts of all good people alſo.*

Min. Is God in hell alſo?

Str. *No, not in hell, unleſs by his power onely.*

Min. Yes, God is in hell alſo; and that not onely by his power, but in his eſſence, and being; or elſe, How is God infinite, if he be not every where?

Str. *What you ſay is true, but I never heard ſo much before.*

Min. Friend, How many Gods be there?

Str. *There is but one God.*

Min. Is there not God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt? And are there not then three Gods?

Str. *Yes, Sir, three Gods.*

Min. No, Friend, three perſons indeed, but onely one God: *Deut.* 6. 4. *Hear O* Iſrael, *the Lord our God is one Lord.*

Str. *Yea, three perſons, and one God, I remember it now.*

Miniſter.

Miniſter. Having ſaid ſomething concerning God, what think you, Friend, concerning your ſelf? Are you a ſinner againſt this God, or no?

Stranger. *Yes Sir, we are all ſinners, God help us:*

Min. Why Friend, which of the Commandments of God have you ever broken?

Str. *Sir, I break them all every day, in thought, word, and deed.*

Min. Say you ſo Friend, let us come to each particular Commandment: Did you ever break the firſt Commandment, *Thou ſhalt have*, &c?

Str. *No Sir, I believe there's but one God.*

Min. What ſay you to the ſecond Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not make*, &c?

Str. *I am ſure I have not broken this Commandment, I am no Papiſt, I abhor Images, I am a Proteſtant, and ſo was my father before me.*

Min. Did you ever break the third Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain*, &c?

Stranger.

Stranger. *No Sir, I am no common Swearer, it may be I let fall an Oath now and then, as others do, but I am ſorry for it when I have done.*

Miniſter. What think you of the fourth Commandment, *Do you keep holy the Sabbath?*

Str. *Yes truly Sir, I keep the Church, all my Neighbours can bear me witneſs, I hear our own Miniſter; ſometimes I ſtay at home, but not very often.*

Min. For the fifth Commandment, *Honour thy Father*, &c. Have you broken this Commandment?

Str. *I hope not much Sir; my father and mother, were they alive, would ſay, I was as good a child as any they had, and we were ſo many of us.*

Min. What think you of the ſixth, ſeventh, and eighth Commandments, *Thou ſhalt not kill, commit adultery, ſteal:* Have you broken theſe Commandments?

Str. *I hope not, for I am no murderer, no adulterer, no thief.*

Min. For the ninth Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs againſt thy neighbour*, have you kept, or broken it? Stranger.

Stranger. *I hope I have not broken it, for I never took a faiſe Oath againſt any man in my life.*

Miniſter. What think you of the tenth Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not covet*, &c? Are you guilty, or not?

Str. *Covet! would I were as free from other ſins, as I am from Covetouſneſs; if you would have me tell you the truth, I am to blame rather on the other hand, I ſpend my money too faſt.*

Min. Oh Friend, how do theſe things ſtand together? you ſaid even now, that you broke all the Commandments every day, in thought, word, and deed, and now I have dealt with you upon each particular Commandment, you clear your ſelf in all, as if you had broken none of the Commandments in thought, word, or deed.

Str. *I pray Sir tell me ſomething, that I may underſtand my ſelf better.*

Min. Know Friend, that you are grievouſly ignorant, and that Satan, the god of this World, hath miſerably blinded you, that your heart fearfully deceiveth you; pray earneſtly to God that

that he would inlighten you; hear, read the Scriptures, Catechiſms, and other good Books; remember Sermons, go to the Miniſter, intreating him to inſtruct you in the principles of Religion; grow acquainted with good people, talk and diſcourſe much with them about heavenly matters; and by the bleſſing of God, in a little time, you will come to know God more, and your ſelf better.

Stranger. *I thank you heartily Sir, and when I come home, I purpoſe to think of your counſel, and to follow it.*

Miniſter. Say and hold, Friend, and remember, that a blind ignorant Soul is worſe than a dark and blind body: *And that the ſoul be without knowledge, is not good,* Prov. 19. 2.

Str. *I hope I ſhall remember what you have ſaid to me as long as I live, and I confeſs I am a ſinner.*

Min. Are you guilty of *Adam*'s ſin, in his eating the forbidden fruit?

Str. *No Sir, that was long before my time, I know nothing of it.*

Min. Yes Friend, I, and you, and all Mankind (except Chriſt) are guilty of

of *Adams* firſt ſin, *Rom.* 5. 12. *By one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſed upon all, for that all have ſinned.*

Stranger. *True Sir, now I remember my ſelf, I have heard them ſay, that we are all guilty of* Adam's *ſin, becauſe we were all in his loins.*

Miniſter. I have heard them ſay, you muſt not build your faith upon hear-ſayes, but upon the written Word of God; and for your reaſon why we are guilty of *Adam*'s ſin, becauſe we were all in his loins, that's not the main reaſon; for then we ſhould be as well guilty of the ſins of our Fathers, and Grandfathers, *&c.* for we were in their loins alſo.

Str. *How then, I pray you, came we to be guilty of* Adam's *firſt ſin?*

Min. Why thus, *Adam* was a publick perſon, repreſenting all Mankind; and the Covenant of life made with him, was not for himſelf only, but for all his poſterity; ſo that when he ſinned, we ſinned; when he fell, we fell with him, in that his firſt tranſgreſſion.

Stranger.

Stranger. *I muſt needs confeſs that I am guilty of* Adam's *firſt ſin.*

Miniſter. Friend, You and I are not only guilty of *Adam*'s firſt ſin, but alſo of many actual tranſgreſſions: You ſaid even now, that ſometimes you let fall an Oath in your common diſcourſe, which is ſwearing, and taking the Name of God in vain; and you ſaid truly alſo, that we break the Commandments of God in thought, word and deed; and the Scripture ſaith, *Rom.* 3. 23. *All have ſinned*, &c. So that you, and I, and all men, are ſinners certainly.

Str. *I acknowledge Sir, that I am a ſinner.*

Min. Yea Friend, but are you ſuch a ſinner as that you deſerve to be damned, and go to Hell for your ſins?

Str. *I hope, not ſo great a ſinner, as to deſerve Hell and damnation.*

Min. Friend, I muſt tell you, that you, and I, and the beſt Men and Women that are, deſerve to go to Hell for their ſins, the leaſt ſin deſerveth eternal death, *Rom.* 6. 23. *The wages of ſin is death.* Stranger.

Stranger. *What you ſay Sir, I perceive is true, for you bring Scripture to prove what you ſay.*

Miniſter. Why then, ſay theſe words after me; I am a ſinner, and ſuch a ſinner, as that I deſerve to go to Hell, and be damned for my ſins.

Str. *I am a ſinner, and ſuch a ſinner, as that I deſerve to go to Hell, and be damned for my ſin.*

Min. Did you ever in your lifetime ſay ſo much before?

Str. *Truly Sir I never thought, or ſaid ſo much before all the dayes of my life.*

Min. It's as true a word as ever you ſpake all your dayes.

Str. *I believe it Sir.*

Min. If you did indeed believe it, Friend, it would trouble you, and make your heart ake within you.

Str. *Sir, how may that appear?*

Min. Thus Friend, if you did verily believe, that you deſerved to forfeit all your eſtate, to be impriſoned all the dayes of your life, to be hanged, or burned to death, would it not trouble you?

Str. *Yes doubtleſs, that it would.*

Miniſter.

Miniſter. Friend, You cannot but think that to go to Hell, and to be damned for ever, is a thouſand times worſe than all this; and therefore if you did indeed believe it, it would trouble you, and that to ſome purpoſe.

Stranger. *I thank God Sir, I was never troubled in mind all my life.*

Min. Friend, let me tell you, that you had more cauſe to thank God, if you could ſay, that you have been troubled for your ſins; this be ſure of, that they who are not troubled for ſin in this World, mourning and repenting, ſhall be troubled with a vengeance in the World to come, when they lie in Hell under the wrath and curſe of God, tormented with fire and brimſtone for ever, becauſe of their ſins againſt God.

Str. *I hope Sir I ſhall never come there, I have alwayes been of a ſtrong faith towards God.*

Min. Friend, what if your ſtrong faith (as you call it) prove no better than a ſtrong fancy, or a ſtrong preſumption at the laſt, and ſo deceive you.

Stranger.

Stranger. *I hope better.*

Miniſter. Friend, if your faith and hope were right, you would find 1. A difficulty and hardſhip in believing; he that never doubted, or never believed; he that never ſaw his want of faith, never lamented his unbelief, hath cauſe to fear he hath no true ſaving faith at all. It's an eaſie matter to preſume, but it's a hard thing to believe, and hope aright in God, *Epheſ.* 1. 19. *It's the exceeding greatneſs of the power of God toward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power:* ver. 20. *Which he wrought in Chriſt when he raiſed him from the dead.* 2. Your faith and hope were they true, would be grounded upon the Word and Promiſes of God. 3. Faith and hope, if right, would *purifie the heart and life*, *Acts* 15.9. 1 *John* 3.3. Now whether you have this kind of faith and hope or no, you had need look to it.

Str. *I truſt I ſhall Sir.*

Min. Friend, to return to what we a little before diſcourſed of, it muſt be granted, that you and I, and all of us, deſerve the wrath and curſe of God

for ever; how do you think to eſcape the damnation of Hell, and to get Heaven and Salvation when you die?

Stranger. *I hope to be ſaved by my ſerving of God, and good prayers, and by leading an honeſt life; how elſe ſhould I be ſaved?*

Miniſter. Friend, What do you hope to be ſaved for your good Works? that is Popery, and I preſume you are no Papiſt.

Str. *Sir, All my Neighbours know I am no Papiſt, I deſie Popery from my heart.*

Min. Friend, let me tell you, that to relie upon our own righteouſneſs, and to hope to be juſtified and ſaved for what we do, is one of the moſt deſperate and damnable points in all Popery; and therefore, whatever you may think of it, if you truſt unto your good prayers, and your honeſt life (as you call it) as if that were enough to ſave you, you are in that point a Papiſt.

Str. *Oh, Sir, the Papiſts truſt to their good works and merits.*

Miniſter.

Minister. Friend, What is it not a good work to serve God, to say good prayers, to lead an honest life, *&c?*

Stranger. *Yes, surely.*

Min. Why then surely, to trust and relie upon them, is to relie upon your good works, which is plain downright Popery.

Str. *I perceive Sir you are too hard for me; but what would you not have men to serve God, use good prayers, and lead good lives?*

Min. Yes, Friend, that I would, and wish from my heart, that you and I, and all men, served God more, prayed and lived better; but here's the mischief, and the Popery of it, when men relie upon those works for justification and salvation.

Str. *Why, may not I safely do it?*

Min. No, the Word of God is expresly against it, *Rom.* 3. 20. *By the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.* Rom. 10. 3. *They who establish their own righteousness, submit not unto the righteausness of God.* Eph. 2. 8. *By grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of our selves:* ver. 9.

Not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt; and many ſuch places I could tell you of.

Stranger. *Sir, you bring ſo much Scripture, that I cannot tell what to ſay to you.*

Min. Friend, it's the Word of God by which we muſt be tryed and judged another day, *Rom.* 2. 16. *In the day* (of Judgment) *when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt, according to my Goſpel* (ſaith the Apoſtle;) and therefore we might do well to try and judge our ſelves by it now.

Str. *You ſpeak reaſon Sir.*

Min. Friend, deal plainly with me, do not you think, that though you have ſometimes offended God, yet you hope that your good works will ſatisfie, and make amends for the bad; and ſo all will be made even between God and you.

Str. *Sir, you hit me right, I wonder how you come to know me ſo well; I do indeed hope, that my good works will anſwer for my bad.*

Min. Friend, I am a ſtranger to you, it is not I that hits you, and knows you,

you, it is the Word of God that hits you, and knows you: onely I may ſomewhat gueſs at your heart by my own (naturally ſuch as yours is;) *Prov.* 27. 19. *As in water face anſwereth to face, ſo the heart of man to man.*

Stranger. *If my good works, my ſerving God, my good prayers, and my honeſt life will not ſerve me, I pray tell me how then may I be ſaved?*

Miniſter. Friend, did you never hear of Jeſus Chriſt (you ſpeak never a word of Chriſt all this while) why he, and he alone is the Saviour of all Gods elect and choſen people, *Matth.* 1. 21. *His Name is called Jeſus, for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins.* Acts 4. 12. *Neither is there ſalvation in any other; for there is none other Name under heaven, given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved.* And many ſuch like places in the Scriptures plainly ſhew, That whoever be ſaved, are ſaved by Chriſt onely.

Str. *True Sir, now you remember me of it, I have heard our Miniſter ſpeak often concerning Jeſus Chriſt.*

Minister. Friend, what think you concerning Jesus Christ?

Stranger. *Why, I think, he is an Angel, the biggest of them all.*

Min. No, Friend, Christ is not an Angel, he made the Angels, *Col.* 1. 16. as before.

Str. *Sir, if he be not an Angel, then he is God in heaven.*

Min. Friend, Is Christ, think you, now he is in heaven, God, or man?

Str. *Sir, I think he was a man when he was on earth, but now he is God in heaven.*

Min. Then Christ is not man now he is in heaven? is he?

Str. *No surely, now he is in heaven he is not a man.*

Min. Yes surely, Friend, he is very man now he is in heaven, yea, God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person, and so will he be for ever.

Str. *Truly Sir, I never thought that Christ had been man now he is in heaven.*

Min. Friend, if you never thought so, yet you have said so, many, and many a time.

Stranger.

Stranger. *What I Sir?*

Minister. Yes, you Friend, you have said over the Creed an hundred and an hundred times, have you not?

Str. *Yes, that I have constantly when I go to bed; and when I rise in the morning, I seldom miss it.*

Min. And when you say, *I believe in God*, &c. You say, *That you believe that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin* Mary, *suffered under* Pontius Pilate, *was crucified, dead and buried* [who? the man Christ Jesus] *that he rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and there sitteth*, &c. *and that he shall come again to judge the quick and the dead*; [who? the man Christ Jesus] and yet now you say, you think he is not man in heaven: see Friend, by the way, how well you mind what you say, when you run over the Creed.

Str. *Sir, now I believe that Christ in heaven is God and man.*

Min. That Christ is not only God, but man also, *Paul* tells us, 1 *Tim.* 2. 5. *There is one Mediator between God and*

man, the man Christ Jesus. Hebr. 7. 24. *But this man* (speaking of Christ) *continueth for ever.*

Stranger. *Sir, I confess you prove what you said, by plain Scriptures.*

Minister. Friend, you say, you hope now to be saved by Jesus Christ, but how so? what hath Christ done for mans salvation?

Str. *Why, he dyed.*

Min. Friend, would not the death of another, of *Abraham, Moses*, of *David, Peter* or *Paul*, saved us, as well as the death of Jesus Christ?

Str. *No.*

Min. Why not?

Str. *Because God appointed him to be our Saviour.*

Min. Friend, you say well, and let me farther tell you, that no meer man could save us, but Christ being God, as well as man, had an infinite worth and vertue in his obedience, his doings and sufferings, and so was able to satisfie, and did satisfie the infinite Justice of God, whom we had offended by our sins.

Str. *Sir, first prove you this?*

Minister.

Miniſter. Why thus, Friend, the blood of Chriſt was not the blood of a meer man, but the blood of God alſo, *to wit*, of the perſon, which was, and is, very God, *Acts* 20. 28. *The Church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood*; to wit, with the blood of Chriſt, who was, and is not only very man, but very God.

Stranger. *Sir, I thank you for telling me this, which I never thought of before.*

Min. Friend, ſince ſalvation is alone by Chriſt, how, and which way do you think to have an intereſt in Chriſt, and ſalvation by Chriſt?

Str. *Why, by believing, and faith in Chriſt; and I have alwayes had a ſtrong faith God-ward, as I ſaid before.*

Min. Did you then never doubt, or queſtion your ſpiritual eſtate? was you never afraid of going to Hell?

Str. *No Sir, never in my life, I was never troubled in my mind, nor, I hope, never ſhall be.*

Min. Say you ſo, Friend, it is better to be troubled here awhile, than to be troubled in Hell for ever; ſin will bring

bring trouble, sooner or later, here, or hereafter, as I told you even now.

Stranger. *Sir, this seems strange to me.*

Minister. Friend, did you never hear how those who were converted, *Acts* 2. 37. *Cryed out, Men and Brethren, what shall we do to be saved?* And how *Paul*, at his conversion, cryed, *Acts* 9. 6. *Lord, What wilt thou have me to do?*

Str. *Yes, Sir: But must it be so with all that believe, and go to Christ?*

Min. Friend, possibly some few who were born of godly Parents, and have had religious education from their childhood, have not been so sensible of their want of Christ, have not had those fears and troubles which others have had; yet all who are savingly brought to Christ, are more or less sensible of their want of Christ, of the worth of Christ, and therefore have Christ and his righteousness indeared to them, *Philip.* 3. 8. *Counting all but dross and dung, that they may be found in Christ.* Holiness is highly prized, and embraced by them; sinne imbittered, and

and made odious to them all their dayes.

Stranger. *But what is Gods uſual way of dealing with men in their converſion?*

Miniſter. Gods uſual way is to *convince* men of *ſin, righteouſneſs, and judgment, Joh.* 16.8. Making men ſenſible of ſin and miſery, of their loſt eſtates in themſelves, of their diſability to help themſelves, or of finding help any where but in Jeſus Chriſt, *Mat.* 9. 12. *The whole have no need of a Phyſician, but they that are ſick:* when ſick of ſin, then, and not till then, do the children of men make out after Jeſus Chriſt.

Str. *Sir, you have ſatisfied me in this, that there is no way to be ſaved, but by faith in Jeſus Chriſt; and that none go to Jeſus Chriſt, but ſuch as find an abſolute neceſſity of going to Chriſt for life.*

Min. Friend, it's well you are come to this, do you then believe in Jeſus Chriſt?

Str. *Yes, Sir, with all my heart, I ſtedfaſtly believe that Chriſt came into the World to ſave ſinners.*

Miniſter.

Minister. And do not you think that the Devils believe as much as all this?

Stranger. *I can't tell.*

Min. Friend, there's no queſtion of it, but that the *Devils do believe that Chriſt is the Son of God*, Mat. 8. 29. that he came into the world to ſave ſinners; *they believe*, that the threatnings true, which makes them *tremble*, *Jam.* 2. 19.

Str. *Sir, what you ſay is true; but I believe that Chriſt dyed for me in particular.*

Min. Friend, how know you that? You do not think that all who hear of Chriſt, ſhall be ſaved by Chriſt, *Luke* 2. 34. *He is ſet for the fall, and for the riſing again of many in* Iſrael. *Rom.* 9. 2. *Though the children of* Iſrael *be as the ſand of the Sea, yet a remnant onely ſhall be ſaved.*

Str. *I ſhall never be beaten off from it, but that Chriſt dyed for me, as well as others.*

Min. Friend, but what if Chriſt did not dye for you? Your conceit that he did dye for you, will not ſerve your turn;

turn; can you be ſaved by believing that which is not true? that's but the preſumption, and vain confidence, which you have no ground for, for ought I can perceive by you.

Stranger. *Sir, you are the ſtrangeſt man that ever I met with in my life; you tell me, that to believe that Chriſt dyed for ſinners, will not ſave me; and that to believe that Chriſt dyed for me in particular, will not ſave me; I pray for God's ſake tell me, what's that faith which will ſave me?*

Miniſter. Friend, it's true, I am a ſtranger to you, but what I have ſpoken to you, is nothing but the truth, and the way; the onely way to be ſaved, is by faith, true faith in Jeſus Chriſt.

Str. *Sir, what's that you call true faith, whereby we are joined to Chriſt, juſtified, and ſaved?*

Min. Friend, I'll tell you, it's not a believing that Chriſt dyed for ſinners, for that the Devils do; it's not a believing that Chriſt dyed for me in particular, for that, 1. Multitudes of ungodly men, and reprobates, do, and may

may do, in a way of presumption: and, 2. Many a doubting Believer wanting assurance, dare not say, I believe that Christ dyed for me in particular; now that conceit or presumption which an ungodly man may have, and a godly man may want, can't possibly be that faith which is justifying and saving.

Stranger. *Pray what is it then?*

Minister. Faith is, Friend, a receiving of Christ, as God the Father offers him in the Gospel, as our King to rule us, our Prophet to teach us, as well as our Priest, who made satisfaction, and now makes intercession for us; it is also out of a sense of our lost estate in our selves, a resting on him alone for salvation, *John* 1. 12. *As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name.*

Str. *Why Sir, do not I do all this?*

Min. Friend, I fear not; for had you taken Christ as your King, you would not dare to allow your self in sinful courses, as Swearing, and the like, which you cannot deny but you are deep-

deeply guilty of; had you taken Christ as a Prophet, you would have been taught by Him, by his Word and Spirit, and have gotten some knowledge at least in these principles and fundamentals of Christianity: Had you rested upon Christ alone for salvation, you would not have told me as you did even now, that you hoped to be saved by your serving God, your good prayers, and the like, not mentioning a word of Jesus Christ; which makes me fear, that as yet you are a meer stranger to Christ, and faith in Christ.

Stranger. *Sir, you say enough to make me despair, and drive me out of my wits.*

Min. Friend, Despairing? Yea, that's it I would have, I'd have you to despair in your self, that so you might come to believe and hope aright in Jesus Christ: And whereas you speak of driving you out of your wits, no, Friend, I would onely drive you out of your sins, your vain presumptions, and carnal confidences; a man is never indeed in his right wits, *never comes to him-*

himself, as the Prodigal did, Luk. 15. 7. till he repents, and believeth aright in Jesus Christ.

Stranger. *Sir, what would you have me to do?*

Minister. This is a good question indeed; *were you pricked in the heart*, as those, *Acts* 2. 37. were you truly and throughly sensible of sin and misery, were you troubled in mind; but then you must unsay what you said before, that you never in your life questioned your spiritual estate, and that you have been alwayes of a strong faith towards God, *&c.*

Str. *Sir, what if it should be so with me? what if I should be troubled?*

Min. I'll tell you, Friend, what you should do, and what you will certainly do, if through the rich grace of God to you, your troubles be in order to conversion and salvation.

Str. *What, I pray Sir?*

Min. Friend, were you troubled indeed to some good purpose, you would put two questions to your self, What have I done? And what shall I do to be saved? What have I done? look backward

backward upon the former part of your life, with ſhame and ſorrow for what you have done, with an unfeigned purpoſe of heart of turning unto God, as *David* ſaith, *Pſal.* 119. 59. *I thought on my wayes, and turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies:* And *Jer.* 8. 6. *No man repented him of his wickedneſs, ſaying, What have I done?*

Stranger. *Sir, for that other queſtion, What ſhall I do? what will that put me upon?*

Miniſter. Friend, this queſtion, *What ſhall I do?* looks forward; and if it be in earneſt, will put you upon ſollicitous and careful thoughts how you may get out of that ſtate of ſin and miſery, which you find your ſelf intangled and involved in; will put you upon going to good Miniſters, and experienced Chriſtians, inquiring of them the way to be ſaved; will put you upon ſearching the Scriptures, and the reading good Books; upon caſting off your old company, and acquainting your ſelf with the people of God (whom before you hated, and cared not for) upon ſecret and earneſt pray-

er to God, according to your ſpiritual wants and neceſſities, will indeed make you to be a new creature.

Stranger. *Well Sir, I ſee then when all is done, I muſt mend my life, and become a new man.*

Miniſter. Friend, you have ſaid well, hold there; but do you think by your mending your life, and becoming a new man, to ſatisfie God for what's paſt, and that your good deeds ſhall make amends for your bad?

Str. *I hope ſo Sir.*

Min. See how you have forgot what even now I told you; no, Friend, ſatisfaction for what is paſt, or what is to come, is made to God the Father onely by Jeſus Chriſt, by what he hath done and ſuffer'd, not by any thing we can do or ſuffer; *When we have done all, we muſt ſay, we are unprofitable ſervants; we have done that which was our duty to do,* Luke 17. 10.

Str. *But Sir, how ſhall I come to have all this you ſpeak of, any part and ſhare in the ſatisfaction made by Chriſt? and how ſhall I become a new creature?*

Miniſter. Friend, this is a good queſtion, I like it very well, and will tell you how, 1. You muſt know and acknowledge that you can do nothing of your ſelf by your own ſtrength; neither believe, nor repent, or the like. 2. You muſt by faith relie upon Chriſt, and Chriſt alone, who hath fulfilled the Law, ſatisfied his Fathers juſtice, and and paid the uttermoſt farthing, for all poor loſt Souls that come unto him. 3. You muſt pray hard, beg the Spirit of God to help your infirmities, to work all your works in you, and for you; and *God hath promiſed to give his holy Spirit to them which ask him*, *Luke* 11. 13.

Stranger. *I believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and repent with all my heart, what would you have me do more?*

Min. Friend, concerning faith in Jeſus Chriſt, we have ſpoken ſomewhat before, enough to ſtartle you, and awake you out of your carnal ſecurity, if you did indeed believe the Word of God. Now for your repentance, what do you do when you repent?

Stranger. *Why, I cry God mercy for all my faults, and deſire him to forgive me.*

Miniſter. Friend, that's Prayer, it's not Repentance; to ſay Lord have mercy on me, and ſo forth, is praying.

Str. *Oh but Sir, I am ſorry for my ſins.*

Min. Friend, You ſpeak theſe words ſo ſmilingly and merrily, as if your heart were not much orewhelmed with ſorrow at the preſent for your ſin.

Str. *Yea, but Sir, I grieve for my ſin, though now I am a little merry I confeſs, I hope there's no harm in that.*

Min. Tell me truly Friend, did you ever weep for ſin in ſecret, between God and your own ſoul?

Str. *Sir, you put me hard to it, I do not remember that ever I ſhed any tears for my ſins: but ſome men are not apt to weep.*

Min. What you ſay, Friend, is very true, ſome are naturally more apt to weep, than others; but cannot you weep, and take on bitterly for other things, for the death of a wife, father, child,

child, or ſome ſpecial friend of yours?

Stranger. *I confeſs then indeed, I have mourned greatly, and almoſt wept my eyes out.*

Miniſter. Friend, it ſeems ſomewhat ſtrange, that you, who have tears in abundance at command upon other ſad occaſions, ſhould not have ſome tears alſo for your ſins againſt God.

Str. *Well Sir, though I weep little, or not at all for my ſins, yet I grieve for my ſins, and hate my ſins, as much as another man.*

Min. Friend, if your grief for ſin were right, it would be 1. For ſin as it is ſin, diſpleaſing to God, a diſhonour to God, and a defilement to your own ſoul. 2. *Godly ſorrow works repentance,* 2 *Cor.* 7. 10. That is, amendment in heart and life.

Str. *I hope I grieve for ſin, and hate it alſo, though you Sir object ſomething ſtill againſt what I ſay.*

Min. Friend, be not angry that I object ſo much, and ſo oft; I do it only to find and beat out the truth, and for your good.

Str. *It may be ſo Sir.*

Miniſter. Friend, You think and ſay you hate your ſins, let me put a few queſtions to you: 1. Do you hate all ſins, one as well as another; he that hates one Toad, hates all Toads. 2. Do you long to be the death of your ſins? is your hatred a mortal, a deadly hatred? do you *mortifie the deeds of the fleſh by the Spirit?* Rom. 8. 13. 3. Deal plainly and truly, as you will anſwer it at death and judgment, is there not ſome beloved ſin that you are loth to part with, loth to be told of by friends or Miniſters, ſome ſinful way of profit or pleaſure which you have no mind to leave, but allow your ſelf in it?

Stranger. *Sir, I have had a great deal of talk with our own Miniſter, who is a very good Churchman, and he never ſaid half ſo much to me.*

Min. It may be ſo, but what ſay you to my laſt queſtion, is there not ſome ſin that you allow your ſelf in, which is as dear as your right eye and right hand unto you?

Str. *Sir, I am not bound to confeſs to you, you have no authority to examine me.*

Miniſter.

Miniſter. No, Friend, I ſpeak in love to you, deſiring (if the Lord pleaſe) to do ſome good to your ſoul; but let me tell you, I fear your conſcience cryes guilty, you begin to be ſo touchy.

Stranger. *Sir, it's my fault to be angry; but you do ſo pinch me: yet I am perſuaded you mean me no hurt; therefore if you'll needs have my heart out of me, it's even no better nor no worſe; I confeſs I love the company of ſome that are none of the beſt, and I can't ſhake them off; the world is hard, and unleſs a man have ſome tricks, there is no living in it; and I do walk in ſome wayes (not to mince the matter with you) which my conſcience tells me I ought not to walk in.*

Min. Friend, You do well to be open with me, by the bleſſing of God it may be for your good, therefore tell me a little farther, do you not ſometimes take the Name of God in vain?

Str. *I hope not, or very little.*

Min. What think you of ſuch words as theſe, As I live, As I am an honeſt man, As I am a Chriſtian, Let me never

ſtir, Let me never be believed more, if it be not thus, and thus? What think you of, By my Faith, By my Troth, and, By our Lady; and of ſaying, O Lord, O God, O Jeſus, and the like, in common diſcourſe? which kind of words I heard fall from you, at leaſt ſome of them, ſince you and I met.

Stranger. *Truly Sir, I think they were better forborn.*

Miniſter. I think ſo too, for they look like Oaths and Curſes, as a light and irreverent uſing of the Name of God. Chriſt ſaith, *Matth.*5.37. *Let your converſation be yea, yea, nay, nay, for whatſoever is more than theſe, cometh of evil.*

Str. *Sir, People will not believe what I ſay, unleſs I uſe ſuch expreſſions as theſe.*

Min. It matters not much, ſo long as you ſpeak the truth plainly; if men will not believe you, the fault is theirs: and let me tell you, that thoſe who are wiſe men indeed, will believe you the leſs for the uſing ſuch words as theſe, and ſay, He that will ſwear, will lye; he that ſticks not at diſhonouring God,

God, by taking his Name in vain, will not ſtick at deceiving man by a lye, and ſpeaking an untruth.

Stranger. *Sir, what you ſay, I confeſs is reaſon.*

Miniſter. Friend, ſince I find you in ſo good a vein, and willing to diſcourſe it on (which I am glad of) tell me, do you not uſe to break the Sabbath?

Str. *No Sir, I go to Church conſtantly when I am well, and nothing hinders me.*

Min. But Friend, do not you accuſtom your ſelf to lie long a Bed in the morning, to ſit idling at the doors that day; to talk of worldly buſineſs, to make bargains, to hire or pay Labourers, to walk in the fields needleſly? do you not uſe ſome Sports, Paſtimes, and Recreations; do you not Travel that day to, or prepare for Markets and Fairs, and the like?

Str. *I confeſs I have done ſo; but I'll do ſo no more.*

Min. Friend, you muſt deſire God to humble you for theſe, as all other your ſins, to pardon you in the blood of Chriſt, and to ſtrengthen you againſt

againſt them for the time to come, by his grace, and holy Spirit working in you.

Stranger. *Sir, I hope I am truly humbled for my ſins, I grieve and am ſorry for them, I have had many afflictions, and ſmarted for my ſins.*

Miniſter. If your ſorrow for ſin be right, it is not ſo much becauſe of afflictions and judgments felt, or feared, as becauſe you have offended God who hath been ſo good and merciful unto you: You will alſo loath and leave your ſins, as the *abominable thing which God hates*, Jerem. 44. 4. Rom. 7. 15. *The evil which I hate.*

Str. *Sir, I hope alſo, that I hate my ſins truly, and indeed.*

Min. Friend, if the hatred of ſin be right, then 1. You'll hate all ſin, as I told you before: *Prov.*8. 13. *The fear of the Lord is to hate every falſe way:* 2. And withal know this, that whoever hateth ſin, loveth God, and his people.

Str. *Why Sir, I make no queſtion of it, but I do love God and his people.*

Miniſter.

Miniſter. Friend, if you do indeed love God, *you do alſo keep his Commandments*, John 14. 15. Not allowing your ſelf in any known ſin; and for the godly, if you love them, you are then acquainted with them, delight in their company, as *David*, Pſal. 119. 63. *I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.* And *Paul*, when he was converted, *joined himſelf to the Diſciples which were at* Jeruſalem, *and at* Damaſcus, *Acts* 9. 19. and 26. Now if we be unacquainted with ſuch people, if ſhie of their ſociety, *&c.* it's in vain to think we love the Brethren, 1 *John* 3. 4. if we do not *love the brotherhood*, (1 *Pet.* 2. 17.) the ſociety of Saints, and that when they are moſt ſtrict and ſpiritual in their communication and converſation; if you be a meer ſtranger to them, where is your love towards them? what ſay you to this, Friend?

Stranger. *Sir, you, in your talk with me, put me hard to it, Lord help me.*

Min. Friend, your ſaying, *Lord help me*, puts me in mind to ask you what good prayers do you uſe to ſay.

Stranger.

Stranger. *Such as my friends taught me, the Ten Commandments, I believe in God,* &c. and the Lords prayer.

Miniſter. Friend, do you think the Ten Commandments, and I believe in God, *&c.* be good Prayers?

Str. *Yes Sir.*

Min. No, Friend, the Ten Commandments are a rule of life, ſhewing us what we muſt do; and, I believe in God, *&c.* ſheweth us the Articles of our Chriſtian Faith; but they are not Prayers: and when we ſay them, we ask nothing at Gods hands.

Str. *They are good things, and it is good to learn them.*

Min. Friend, that is true, it is good to learn them, and to underſtand the meaning of them; to live according to the Commandments, and to believe according to the Articles of our Chriſtian Faith; but to think they are Prayers, and to ſay them over inſtead of Prayers, that is your miſtake.

Str. *Sir, I confeſs my error therein.*

Min. Friend, what think you of the Creed, I believe in God, *&c?* is that form of words Scripture, the written Word

Word of God, as well as the Ten Commandments, and the Lords Prayer?

Stranger. *Yes, ſurely Sir.*

Miniſter. No, Friend, we find *the Ten Commandments, in* Exod. 20. *and the Lords Prayer, in* Matth. 6. 9. but *I believe in God,* &c. in ſo many words together is not in all the Bible; but that form of words was made up, and laid together by men, yet it is agreeable to the Word of God, and ſo is of good uſe for all Believers.

Str. *Sir, I thank you; if you would explain and open ſomething to me out of the Ten Commandments, I believe in God, and the Lords Prayer, you would do me a great courteſie.*

Min. Friend, I am glad to find you willing to learn, but that is too long a work for the little time we are like to be together; and therefore I would adviſe you by all means when you come home, to learn good Catechiſms, and to talk with good Miniſters, and good People, putting queſtions to them, and they will help you.

Str. *True Sir, but whilſt we are together, it may be you may ſay ſomething out*

out of them, which may do me good.

Miniſter. Why then, Friend, in the firſt Commandment, *Thou ſhalt have, &c.* what do you think God forbids in that Commandment?

Stranger. *I think, the having more Gods than one.*

Min. Friend, what you ſay, is a general truth; but what is it to have other Gods?

Str. *Sir, to have other Gods, is, I think, to worſhip the Sun, Moon, or Stars, &c.*

Min. Friend, let me tell you, the Commandment of God is ſpiritual, and reacheth the hearts of men; ſo that, to love, deſire, joy, fear, truſt in any thing more than God, is to have other gods: thus we may make husbands, wives, children, friends, trades, cuſtomers, *&c.* riches, honours, pleaſures, *&c.* to be our gods, when our hearts run out more after, are ſet more upon them, than upon God.

Str. *Sir, this is ſtrange.*

Min. Friend, as ſtrange as it is, it is very true; for God ſaith, *Prov.* 23.26. *Give me thine heart:* and *Matth.* 22.37. *Thou*

Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind; and it is certain, to have our hearts upon any perſon or thing more than God, is to make that our God, and our Idol.

Stranger. *Sir then, by what you ſay, if any be more careful to pleaſe, or more fearful to offend a husband, a wife, a maſter or miſtriſs, a land-lord, or great man that rules over us, than we are careful to pleaſe, or fearful to offend God, is to make them our gods.*

Miniſter. Friend, it is certainly ſo, however it may ſeem to be new doctrine to you. And for the ſecond Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not make, &c.* what think you is forbidden in this Commandment?

Str. *I think we are forbidden to worſhip Images, as the Papiſts do.*

Min. Friend, that you ſay is true; but the Commandment of God hath a farther reach in it, and forbids not only the worſhipping of Images, or God by Images, but the worſhipping of God any other way not appointed in his Word, *Deut.* 12. 32. *What thing ſoever*

I com-

I command you (he ſpeaks of worſhip, *ver.* 31.) *obſerve to do it; thou ſhalt not add thereto, nor diminiſh from it.*

Stranger. *I confeſs Sir, this is plain Scripture, I cannot gainſay it.*

Miniſter. Well Friend, for the third Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain,* &c. What think you is meant by the Name of God?

Str. *To deal plainly with you Sir, I cannot well tell on a ſudden, what is meant by the* Name of God, *though I have ſaid it over many and many a time.*

Min. Friend, are not men known by their names, you, and I, and others? why then the Name of God is that whereby God makes himſelf known, by his Titles, Attributes, Ordinances, Word, and Works.

Str. *Sir, I think what you ſay is right, but I do not well underſtand you. I pray tell me, what you mean by Titles, Attributes, Ordinances, Word, and Works?*

Min. Friend, I like this inquiring of yours well, and I will tell you, 1. By the title of God, is meant Lord, Jehovah, Jah,

Jah, *&c.* 2. An Attribute of God is that which is ſpoken of God; as that he is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable: that God is Almighty, moſt wiſe, moſt holy, moſt merciful, juſt, faithful, *&c.* 3. By Ordinances, I underſtand every part of that worſhip which God hath appointed, as Prayer, Preaching, Reading, Hearing, Singing Pſalms, the Sacraments, *&c.* 4. By the Word, I mean the Scriptures, wherein God revealeth his Will, and maketh himſelf known to the children of men. 5. By Works, I underſtand the works of Creation and Providence, whereby God revealeth much of himſelf to men who eye God in them.

Stranger. *What is it then to break this Commandment?*

Miniſter. It is to prophane, or abuſe any thing whereby God makes himſelf known.

Str. *I hope Sir you will tell me ſomething alſo out of the fourth Commandment.*

Min. Friend, why is that day we keep holy, call'd *the Lords day*, and *the Sabbath?* for theſe are names which

the Scriptures give that day, *Rev.* 1. 10. *Gen.* 2. 23.

Stranger. *Sir, I never heard that queſtion put before.*

Miniſter. Friend, it is called the *Lords day*, becauſe the Lord appointed it to be kept holy, and that in remembrance of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the great work of Redemption wrought by him. And it is called the *Sabbath* (which ſignifieth reſt) becauſe it is to be kept by us as an holy reſt unto the Lord.

Str. *What muſt we do on the Sabbath day?*

Min. Friend, we muſt ſpend the whole day in worſhipping God publickly and privately.

Str. *Sir, may not works of mercy and neceſſity be done that day?*

Min. Yes, Friend, if they be indeed works of neceſſity and mercy, and not ſo in pretence only.

Str. *Sir, you ſaid the whole day muſt be kept holy; what mean you by the whole day?*

Min. Friend, by the whole day, I mean full Four and twenty hours; for the Sabbath muſt be as long as any other day of the week beſides. Str.

Stranger. *I pray Sir, what muſt we not do on the Sabbath?*

Miniſter. Friend, we muſt not make that day, 1. A day of *idleneſs*, barely reſting from labour, as our Beaſts do. 2. Nor a day of *worldly buſineſs*, in buying, ſelling, or the like. 3. Nor a day of *ſports and recreations* much leſs. 4. Nor a day of *ſinning* eſpecially, as in drunkenneſs, ſtealing, and the like. 5. Nor a day only of outſide devotions, but we muſt labour to worſhip God in ſpirit alſo, and to enjoy ſome ſpiritual communion with God in his holy Ordinances.

Str. *Sir, but am I not at liberty as to my thoughts and words that day?*

Min. No, Friend, for God is a Spirit, his day and worſhip ſpiritual, ſo that we ought to lay aſide all unneceſſary thoughts and words that day, (as well as works) about worldly employments and recreations, *Iſa.* 58. 13. Not ſpeaking thine own words on the Sabbath.

Str. *Sir, I hope you will ſay ſomething to me alſo concerning the other Commandments.*

Miniſter. Yes Friend; but more briefly, leſt our time ſhould fail us; what think you is meant by *Father and Mother* in the fifth Commandment?

Stranger. *Sir, I think, my* Father *that begot me, and my* Mother *that bore me.*

Min. Friend, that is true you ſay, but there is more in it; by *Father* and *Mother*, we muſt underſtand Magiſtrates and Miniſters, and all our Superiours in any kind whatſoever.

Str. *Sir, and what is it to honour my Superiours?*

Min. Friend, it is to give them that inward and outward reſpect which is due to them, and to obey the lawful commands of thoſe who are over us.

Str. *Sir, doth this command require only our duty to Superiours?*

Min. Yes, it injoined alſo the duties of Superiours to Inferiours.

Str. *Sir, I pray tell me what the ſixth, ſeventh, eighth, and nine Commandments require of us?*

Min. Briefly thus, the ſixth Commandment enjoineth all lawful endeavours for good of the life; the ſeventh

of

of the chaſtity; the eighth, of the wealth and outward eſtate; the ninth, of the good name of our ſelves and others; each Commandment forbidding whatſoever is contrary, or oppoſite thereunto.

Stranger. *The tenth Commandment alſo, I pray Sir ſpeak to.*

Miniſter. The tenth Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not covet*, &c. requireth not only a full contentment with our own condition, but a right and charitable frame of heart toward our Neighbour, and all that is his.

Str. *Sir, I thank you for all this good diſcourſe of yours, I have rid many a mile with ſome Miniſters, and never had half ſo much from them.*

Min. Friend, it may be ſo; but was not you your ſelf much in fault, did you put queſtions to them, ſuch as I have now put to you, and you to me?

Str. *No, Sir, to ſpeak the truth, and I am afraid I am much to blame for it.*

Min. One word more before we part; I preſume, Friend, you have been at the Sacrament, and received the Communion.

Stranger.

Stranger. *Yes, many a time, at* Eaſter, *methinks, I have a mind to it.*

Miniſter. Friend, and why not at other times alſo: Is your ſoul an hungry, and doth the ſpiritual appetite come to you but once a year?

Str. *Sir, that is the time we uſe to go, and then the reſt of my Neighbours receive.*

Min. Friend, then it ſeems you go much for cuſtom and company; but tell me, did you ever get any good by the Sacraments?

Str. *Sir, I hope no hurt.*

Min. Friend, they who live ignorantly, or ſcandalouſly, *eat and drink unworthily, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, and ſo eat and drink judgment, or damnation to themſelves.* 1 *Cor.* 11. 27, 29.

Str. *I hope I go better prepared than ſo.*

Min. How do you prepare your ſelf?

Str. *Sir, I give my name to the Miniſter aforehand, I put on my beſt apparel, I faſt that morning, lay the bleſſed bread and wine next my heart; yea, I am in love and charity with all men, and forgive*

give thoſe that have wronged me with all my heart.

Miniſter. Friend, that which in your anſwer fell laſt from you, is quickly ſaid, not ſo ſoon done; how can you ſay, you are in love and charity with all men, *&c.* when your own heart tells you, and all your Neighbours can teſtifie, that for ſuch and ſuch a man you cannot give him a good word, or a good look, you expreſs much joy when any evil befalls him or his, where is your love then?

Stranger. *Sir, you can't imagine what a deal of wrong he hath done me for many years together, my heart cannot but riſe againſt him, whenever I ſee him; but I hope to be eaven with him, and to pay him all I owe him before I dye.*

Min. Look you now, Friend, what is become of your charity, and of forgiving with all your heart, thoſe words were but wind, your heart deceives you, you have expreſſed a great deal of malice and hatred in what you ſaid laſt.

Str. *Sir, I am ſorry if I have offended you.*

Miniſter. Alas Friend, you do not offend me, it troubles me indeed to ſee how you offend God, and delude your own ſoul; and how the Devil cheats you, makes you to have better thoughts a great deal of your ſelf, than there is any cauſe for.

Stranger. *Sir, I hope, for all this, that I live in charity, and do as I would be done by.*

Min. Friend, it is well if your hope do not make you aſhamed; if any man had wronged you, would you not have him to acknowledge his fault to you, and to make reſtitution for all the wrong you ſuſtained?

Str. *Yes Sir, you may be ſure, I think it all the reaſon in the world I ſhould.*

Min. Now Friend, let Conſcience ſpeak out, did not you at ſuch and ſuch a time defraud, and go beyond ſuch and ſuch a man, working upon his ſimplicity, or neceſſity? have you not put off bad wares, and bad money many a time? have not you ſpoken an untruth, told many a lye in bargaining? and did you ever yet go to them whom you wronged, did you ever make

make them ſatisfaction? and where is now your doing as you would be done by?

Stranger. *I muſt confeſs my heart ſmites me, upon what you ſay.*

Miniſter. Friend, *if your heart condemns you, God is greater than your heart, and knoweth all things by you*, 1 John 3. 20. And look to it, leaſt the Devil and your heart deceive you with ſhews and ſhadows of faith, repentance, love and charity, inſtead of the graces themſelves in truth and reality.

Str. *I thank you Sir for the good counſel you give me, and I pray God I may follow it.*

Min. Friend, I remember in the beginning of our diſcourſe, you told me of your ſaying over *the Ten Commandments, Lords Prayer*, and *I believe in God*, &c. every morning, and every night.

Str. *Sir, I did ſo, and would you would ſay ſomething to me concerning the* Lords Prayer, *and* I believe in God, &c. *as you have concerning the* Ten Commandments.

Miniſter.

Miniſter. Say you ſo Friend, I cannot withſtand ſo good a motion, tell me therefore, do you think that the bare ſaying over theſe words, *Our Father, &c.* is acceptable ſervice to God?

Stranger. *Sir, I hope ſo, why elſe did our friends teach it us when we were children?*

Min. Friend, your Parents and friends did well to teach you to ſay the words by heart; but it had been better if they had alſo taught you the meaning of them, that ſo when you came to years of diſcretion, you might have been able to go it over with underſtanding.

Str. *That is true Sir, and I hope I underſtand it.*

Min. Friend, what do you pray for, or ask at Gods hands, when you ſay, *Hallowed be thy Name?*

Str. *Why?* [Thy Kingdom come.]

Min. Friend, [*Thy Kingdom come*] is another part of the Prayer; but what is the thing you beg for, and would have, when you ſay, *Hallowed*, &c.

Str. *Truly Sir, I cannot tell you.*

Min.

Miniſter. Friend, you have ſaid over the words 100 and 100 times, but it ſeems never ſaid them with underſtanding, and ſurely that is not right, for *Paul* ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 14. 15. *I will pray with the ſpirit, and I will pray with the underſtanding alſo:* That is, ſo that others who join with us may underſtand us, much more we underſtand our ſelves, and our own meaning.

Stranger. *Sir, what ſhould I think of, and pray for, when I ſay thoſe words,* Hallowed, *&c?*

Min. Friend, you ſhould pray and deſire of God, that he would order all things in the world for his own honour and glory; and that he would enable you, and others, to glorifie and honour him in a due and right uſe of his Ordinances, Word and Works, or whatever he maketh himſelf known by.

Str. *Truly Sir, to deal plainly with you, I never thought of, or deſired any ſuch thing, as oft as I have ſaid thoſe words.*

Min. Friend, I cannot conveniently go over the other Petitions in the Lords Prayer with you: What hath been

been ſaid already in diſcourſe about the firſt Petition, *Hallowed*, &c. may abundantly convince you of your ſaying you knew not what, and in a very ignorant and formal way.

Stranger. *Truly Sir I am, I confeſs, ignorant, yet I am willing to learn.*

Miniſter. Friend, I believe you are, or elſe you would not have held on the diſcourſe ſo long, and ſo freely with me; for I fall in company with ſome upon the Road, who will by no means ſpeak one word with me concerning God, and the things of God; and if I motion ſuch talk a little, they are either altogether dumb and ſilent, or ſhift out of my company, ſaying, They muſt ride faſter, that their buſineſs requireth haſte; or they will lagg behind, or go out of the way to ſpeak with a friend, and ſome fall a quarrelling, ſaying, What have you to do to Catechize me? I will not learn of you, every Tub muſt ſtand upon its own bottom, *&c.*

Str. *Sir, If I had in my younger dayes been ſo willing to learn, as I ſhould have been, I had not been ſo far to ſeek in*

theſe

theſe things as now I am, nor ſo ignorant as you find me to be.

Miniſter. Well ſaid Friend, that was a ſavoury ſpeech of yours, I like it very well, and therefore am willing to have a word or two with you about the Creed, *I believe in God*, &c. before we part, though much of our former diſcourſe hath been about things to be believed.

Stranger. *I thank you Sir, I pray ſpeak on, I will hear you.*

Min. Friend, I hope you remember what I told you even now, that this form of words, *I believe in God*, &c. is not Scripture, though it be agreeable to the Word of God; and that it is not a Prayer, not to be ſaid for a Prayer. Let me now hear you ſay your Belief.

Str. *I believe in God*, &c. and *I believe the Holy Catholick Holy-Church*, &c.

Min. Friend, What is that you ſay, *Holy Catholick Holy-Church*; you miſtake the words, I fear therefore you know not the meaning of them, it is not *Holy Catholick Holy-Church*, but the word is *Catholick*, and what mean you by Catholick? *Stranger.*

Stranger. *Sir, I cannot tell, it is a hard word methinks.*

Miniſter. Friend, it is ſo, but you that ſay it over and over, day by day, ſhould have asked the meaning of it, that you might have known what you had ſaid.

Str. *I pray Sir, what is meant by it?*

Min. Friend, it is originally a Greek word, and ſignifieth Univerſal, or General; ſo that to believe the Catholick Church, is to believe that there is an Univerſal Church, and that God hath a people up and down ſcattered in ſeveral places, and in all ages of the world.

Str. *Sir, I never underſtood ſo much before.*

Min. Friend, you perceive again by this, that you have lived very ignorantly, mindleſs of knowledge, and of the things of God, and of the great concernments of your Soul, and of Eternity. Let me give you ſome good counſel before we part, it may be you and I ſhall never meet again; and as we never ſaw the faces one of another (for ought we know) before this day, ſo poſſibly we never may ſee each other again till the day of Judgment; that great and terrible day of the Lord. Let me adviſe you, and the Lord perſuade your heart,

1. To make Conſcience of ſecret Prayer, begging of God for Chriſt his ſake, that he would make you ſenſible of the ignorance, of the blindneſs of the mind of the hardneſs and impenitency of the heart; of the careleſneſs and mindleſneſs of the ſpirit, in the great things of grace

grace and ſalvation, be earneſt with God to give you knowledge, and conſider *that the ſoul be without knowledge is not good*, Prov. 19. 2. As alſo, for repentance from dead Works, and a true ſaving faith in Jeſus Chriſt. Beg of God an heart, to ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs, and that you may be of thoſe who ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate, and of thoſe violent ones who take the Kingdom of Heaven by force, *&c.* 2. Be careful to hear good Miniſters preach, remembring what moſt concerneth you in what you hear. 3. Be much in ſearching the Scriptures, and reading of good Books, Catechiſms, and ſuch like. 4. Make choice of good Company, of ſuch as fear God, and walk preciſely, holily, righteouſly, and ſoberly in this preſent evil world, and improve ſuch acquaintance by good conference with them, putting ſuch queſtions to them as may make for your edification; and they, let me tell you, will be as glad of your ſociety, as you of theirs. 5. Be ſure if you have a Family, to ſet up the worſhip of God in your Family, reading the Scriptures, and praying morning and evening with the houſhold, Catechizing, and inſtructing your Children and Servants, if you have any. 6. And laſtly, be ſtrict in ſanctifying the Sabbath, ſpend that day well, though the reſt of the Neighbours be looſe and careleſs therein; and though men, ungodly men, hate you, mock and perſecute you, it matters not, ſo long as God loveth you.

you. Remember, that 2 *Tim.* 3. 12. *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.* And that of Christ, *Matth.* 5. 10. *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God:* And ver. 11, 12. *Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you,* &c.

And now Friend, fare you well and the Lord bless you.

Stranger. *And you also, good Sir, I hope I shall remember you, and some of your words to me as long as I live; onely let me desire one favour of you, that I may know your name, and where you live.*

Minister. That you shall Friend, my name is so and so, and I live at such a place, and if your occasions call you thither, I shall be glad to see you; and let me know your name, and where you live, and possibly if I come that way, I may see you. Once more Farewell.

FINIS.

A TREATISE OF Christian Conference.

MY design being to bear up the honour, the necessity, and usefulness of Christian Conference (too much neglected, even by the best of men) it will not be wholly impertinent to bear down some of that unruliness and irregularity, which the Tongues of too many are too much guilty of. The Apostle *James*, as it were, bores the black tongues of men with a red hot Iron of sharp, but just rebuke. *The Tongue is a Fire, a world of iniquitie, setteth on fire the course of Nature, and it is set on fire of Hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of Serpents, and things in the Sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the Tongue can no man Tame, it is an unruly evil, full*

The Tongues Unruliness.

vers. 6. 7.

of deadly poyson. Its untamedness and unruliness appears in its great miscarriage, and that both in reference to God and man. 1. In *reference to God:* we are too tongue-tied in speaking both to God in Prayer, Praises, and Confessions, and of God with others. To God: He was a great man, and you will say, as good as great, who being a man of few words, and of much prayer, was thought to speak more to God than men: Possibly, *that man after Gods own heart*, was such a one, who saith very truly, though of himself, *seven times a day do I praise thee:* and again, *I give my self unto prayer.* Possibly some Popish Votaries, in a superstitious way, possibly also, a man may be found in our dayes, who is very slow to speak, but of a musing, meditabundous spirit, in holy ejaculations, Colloquies, and Soliloquies betwixt God and himself, much also in prayer by himself, and with others; but such a man, where-ever he dwells, (I believe he dwells alone by himself) is a very great rarity, one of many thousands, who speaks more to God, than to men. Again, 2. We are all born, and live too much tongue-tied, as to our Speech of God,

1. *In reference to God in speaking.*

1. *To God.*

Ps. 119. 164. & 109. 164.

2. *Of, God and for God.*

God, to and with others; though we have a large and spacious field, very pleasant, Fragrant, flowery and Odoriferous for our Discourse to walke up and down, and expatiate it self in; to wit, God in his essence and subsistencies, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, God in his Decrees, in his works of Creation and Providence; God in his Covenants made with man, that of Works, and that of Grace; God in his Word, Law, and Gospel, in his commands, promises, and threatnings. Againe touching Christ, his person, natures, and offices, his humiliation and Exaltation; As also touching the Holy Ghost, his beginning and carrying on the work of God, in the Elect, from the first to the last: Adde hereunto, the many and great priviledges and benefits, which the effectually called ones are and shall be made partakers of by Christ in life, at death, at the Resurrection, and to Eternity. I might inlarge, but one would think in what is said, there were room enough and enough for all the nimble tongues in the world, to busy, tire, and weary themselves in. O how sad then is it, to

1. Omission.

have so little of God in our Mouths? to observe how people, who have their faces *Zion*-ward, can spend hour after hour together, it may be day after day, and yet scarce have a word concerning God, Christ, the Spirit, or the great affairs of their soules, and of Eternity, from one end of the prattle to the other. This fruit indeed is bad, and bitter, but yet the root is worse. The true and onely reason, I know of, is this, God is not much in our hearts, and therefore but little in our Mouths; for *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things, and an evil man* &c. The Psalmist giveth the ungodly man a black brand, saying; *God is not in all his thoughts*; and let it be for an humiliation, and lamentation, that God is no more in the hearts and Mouths of the best amongst us.

The reason, God is little in our hearts *Mat.* 12. 34, 35.

Ps. 10. 4.

Secondly, Having laid down a little, and but a little, of the Tongues Unrulinesse in reference to God, it's sinful silence, neither speaking much to God, nor of God, which is its greivous miscarriage by way of omission. Let some

enquiry

enquiry be made after the Tongues positive guilt by way of Commission, it's speaking irreverently, lightly, or prophanely, and that in reference to God, and so speaking too much of God. For instance, First, There is a frequent abuse of the *Titles* and *Attributes* of God in our common discourse, saying, O Lord, O God, O Christ, O Jesu, O dear God, O sweet Saviour, and the like, and this upon very trifling occasion; as when one meets an acquaintance unexpectedly, out flye these words, or the like, and usher in no more but an, how dost thou? who thought to see thee here to day? or, a whence comest thou? or whither art thou going? Is not this to play with Sacred things? and to take the name of the Lord our God in vain? A question also may be, whether, when we hear one sneeze, to cry God bless you, or Christ help you, be a bounden duty, which upon this occasion God requires at our hands. Its the judgment of a worthy Writer of this Nation (who was no dishonour to the Nation) that there is more cause with us to pray for a man Coughing, than Sneezing; for

2 *Commission.*

1 *Titles abused.*

Coughing argueth the Cold taken to be too ſtrong for Nature to eject it; but ſneezing ſheweth Natures ſtrength in maſtering the Cold taken, and caſting of it out. When I was young, as I remember, I read it in the French Academy, that Sneezing was a good ſign of a bad cauſe, of natures ſtrength, though cold were taken. Adde alſo this queſtion, Whether to apply the incommunicable Attributes of God, as Allmighty, Infinite, and the like, to perſons or things here below, as to ſay, I love or hate ſuch a perſon or thing infinitely; might not ſuch language well be ſpared?

2 Scriptures abuſed.

Secondly, The Tongue trips, and falls foully, when it makes bold with Scriptures, uſing, or abuſing rather, the phraſe and language of it, in jeſting, to provoke mirth in Company, or in wreſting it to maintain erronious opinions, as ſeducers do: I grant that there is a facetiouſneſs, a witty chearineſs in diſcourſe, which being well ordered, may not onely be lawful, but a duty: yet to jeſt it in the words of Scripture; as when aſked, why did not you come at ſuch a time to ſuch a place, as you promiſed?

1. In jeſting.

To

To answer merrily, saying, I have a Farm, *&c.* I pray you, have me excused; or I have a Wife, and could not come; and an hundred the like expressions, which the Devil, and prophane wits of men, can forge and fancy; surely this way of tossing the word of God, to and fro, falls within the Compass of that jesting, *which* the Apostle saith, *is not Convenient.* The Original word used, which the Philosophers ranked among one of their vertues, the Holy Apostle puts in the Catalogue of vices, as *fornication, covetousness, foolish talking, and jesting.* Talking scurrilously and lasciviously, is alwayes bad enough, especially when cloathed with Scripture Language; that is a breach of many commands together. Jesting in Scripture phrases, is unbeseeming the gravity and sanctity of Christianity. Remember, it is ill jesting with edged Tooles; such surely is the word of God, yea, *it's sharper than any two edged sword.* Againe, the holy Word of God is miserably abused, and prophaned, in the wresting and misapplying it, to the countenancing and patronizing of errors and heresies, or

Eph. 5.4.

Vers. 3.

Heb. 4. 12.

2. *In wresting the Scripture.*

2 *Pet.* 3. 16. of vicious words and practices. This the Apostle Complains of, saying, *That in* Pauls *Epistles, are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.* Unlearned, and unstable: Ignorance is the Root of instability. Againe ignorance, and instability, are the Mother, and Nurse, of most, or all the corrupt opinions, and wayes, which are taken up and walked in by the mistaken children of men: and one great Engine which Satan useth, in his seductions, is the wresting, misconstruing, and the misapplying the Holy Scriptures; making men believe that the Spirit of God speaketh that in the word, which indeed never was at all the meaning of the Holy Ghost. The word in the Original significantly points at this, alluding to tormentors, who lay men on the Rack, and make them to speak that which they never meant, or thought; so that this wresting, is to torment and rack the Scriptures; and, which is dreadful to think, all this is to

to their own destruction. As if a man sadly distempered, walking in a pleasant Spring or Grove, should cut up a young Twig, and be twisting and twining of it, till he had made a with of it, and then go and hang himself therein. Thus the Sabbath breakers, who profane the day by idleness, by speaking their own words, by finding their own pleasure, upon Gods holy day; if rebuked, will plead, saying, *The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.* Thus the greedy worldlings, who pant *after the dust of the Earth,* and all the day long *are lading themselves with thick Clay*, mind nothing but Earth, Earth, Earth; if questioned, why do ye thus? why spend ye your strength for that which is not Bread? and labour for that which will not satisfie? they have a ready answer, *If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.* Thus the gluttons and voluptuous Epicures of our Age, *who make their bellies their gods, faring deliciously every day*, who care for nothing but to eat the fat, and drink

The Sabbathbreaker. *Mar.* 2. 27.

The worldling. *Amos* 2. 7. *Hab.* 2. 6.

1 *Tim.* 5. 8.

The Glutton. *Phil.* 3. 19. *Luk.* 16. 19.

the ſweet; if a reaſon of this their bruti-
ſh ſenſuality be demanded, They'l
Eccl. 2. 24. preſently tell you, *There is nothing better for a man, than that he ſhould eat and drink, and that he ſhould make his ſoul enjoy good in his labour.* Yea, the worſt of ſinners, common ſwearers, drunkards, adulterers, lyers, cheaters, and ſuch like, will wreſt and pervert Scriptures to their own deluſion, obduration, and deſtruction.

The worſt of ſinners.

3. The Tongues of men grow black and bloody with Oathes of ſeveral ſorts and ſizes. 1. Blaſphemous Oathes, by the parts and members of Chriſt, by his wounds, bloud. 2. Popiſh Oathes, by Saints, by our Lady *Mary*, by *John*, *&c.* Or by Idols, by the Maſs, by the Rood. 3. Phariſaical Oathes, by Creatures, as the light, the fire, the bread, the drink, *&c.* Or 4. Ridiculous Oathes, by Lakin, by Cock-by-Pye, by Jekins, Bodikins, *&c.* Adde hereunto, thoſe diminutive diſputable Oathes, (as ſome would have them) as by my Faith, by my Troth, by Yea and by Nay, God's me (God is with me) God's ſo (by God it's ſo) as I live, as I am an honeſt man,

3. *By ſwearing.*

See Learned Dr. Downam *on the* 3 *Co.*

as

as I am a Gentleman, as I am a Christian, and such like. Surely the forbearing of this kind of language would have more of wisdome, peace, and safety in it.

4. Tongues of Sinners do bespot and bespatter themselves and others in Cursing and Maledictions, as, a Pox, or, a Plague on you, the Divel take you; let me never stir more, speak more, be believed more, if the thing spoken of be not thus, or thus; Let me be hanged, whipped, let me be a Vagabond and beg my bread, *&c.* I might adde, Damn me, Ram me, *&c.* and such new-coin'd execrations: But possibly it may be prudence to forbear the mentioning any more in this kind. The Devil hath witty inventions to destroy men, and men to destroy themselves. This should be, O let it be for a lamentation among us, and the rather because this cursed disease of cursing is grown Catholick, and epidemical; superiours through the pride and haughtiness of their Spirits curse inferiours; and inferiours through discontent and murmuring curse Superiours, yea *Curse their King, and their God,* *Isa.* 8. 21. 4. *By cursing.*

God, and look upwards. There are Parents and Masters who curse their Children, and servants, and that before their faces; and withall, Children and Servants Curse them as fast behind their backs. In briefe, the Cursing Tongue spares neither man nor beast; Have you not heard how Draymen, Carrmen, Coachmen, Carryers, curse their Horses, and that for not doing what the poor creature is not able to do? how gamesters will Curse their Cards and Dice? how some passionate ones in hunting or hawking, curse the Hawks and Hounds? all which argues simpleness, as well as profaneness? And have you not read, *Jer.* 23. 10. *Because of Swearing (or Cursing) the Land mourneth?* And do you not believe (if you do not I do) that Atheisme, Unbeliefe, and Profaneness, are the cursed root of this accursed fruit? *Ps.* 36. 1. *This transgression of the wicked saith in my heart, there is no fear of God before his eyes.* You see I am hot and angry; I hope you'l Charitably judg me zealous rather for God, and against the Cursing generation of this Age: and yet before I go off, let me make my marking

Iron

Iron red hot, as hot as fire can make it, lapping it upon the naked back, stigmatizing and burning to the very bone, such who in their mad moods tremble not to curse either *Moses* or *Aaron*, Magistrates or Ministers. *Solomon* (the wisest of Kings) giveth his Counsel, *Curse not the King, no not in thy thought, and curse not the rich in thy Bedchamber; for a bird of the aire shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.* And God by *Moses* of old, *Thou shalt not revile the Gods, nor Curse the ruler of thy people.* And for Ministers, no wonder if they be sorely lashed with the scourge of Tongues, when *Jeremiah* himself escaped not, but complaineth, *Wo is me, my Mother, that thou hast born me a man of strife, and a man of contention, to the whole Earth: I have neither lent on Usury, nor men have lent to me on Usury, yet every one of them doth Curse me:* A pox on these black-Coats, Priests (in contempt) *Baals* Priests, and the like: the worst words in some mouths are thought too good for them.

Eccl. 10. 20.

Exo. 22. 28.

2. Having

2. *In reference to men.* 2. Having spoken thus far something concerning the Tongues miscarriage, in reference to God, speaking but little to God in Prayer, or of God in Company, yet too much using, or abusing rather, his Names, and Titles in common talke, in jesting with or wresting of the Holy Scriptures, as also in swearings and cursings; I proceed to treat also concerning the Tongues Unrulinesse in reference to men, which may be considered,

1. *In general, Defamation.* 1. In general, Defamation, or words injurious to the good Names of others. *Paul* warnes *Titus* to put the people whom he taught, in mind, *to speak evil of no man,* or to blaspheme no man, as the original word carrieth it, not to blot or hurt the name or fame of others. *Beza* thinks that *Paul* in this expression is a fair Expositor of *Davids* words, *Psal.* 15. 3. *He that backbiteth not with his Tongue;* One of the Psalmists negative Characters of the man, *Who shall abide in the Tabernacle of the Lord, and dwell in his holy hill:* adding this, *nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.* This sin of defamation is much heightned, 1. By

Tit. 3. 1, 2.

verſ. 1.

verſ. 3.

the

the reach and duration of it, which is far and long, *What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false Tongue? Sharp arrows of the mighty, with Coals of Juniper*; which some say will be burning a year together. 2. By the dignity of the persons defamed, *speaking evil of Dignities, despising dominion*, a kind of old Levellers. Or Thirdly, from the relation they stand in to the persons defamed. Thus for servants to defame their Masters, or Children their Parents, Schollers their Teachers, or Subjects their Soveraign, or people the Ministers, carries a sharp accent of aggravation with it. For *Absolom* to disparage his Father the King, and the Jewes to slander the Prophet, was very heinous; yet they were deeply guilty of it, witness their own words, *Come, said they, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah:* what devices? *Come, and let us smite him with the Tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.* Witness also the Prophets complaint, *I have heard* (saith he) *the defaming of many; report, say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting,*

Ps. 120. *vers.* 3 4. Ainsworth *in Locum.*

2 *Pet.* 2. 10. *Jude* 8.

Jer. 18. 18.

Jer. 20. 10.

ting, saying, peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him. It's methinks remarkable, to observe Satans wily designes, in provoking the Jewes to slander and defame *Jeremiah*; one was, to hold them in their infidelity and unbeliefe, *let us smite him with the Tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words*; another was, to give them a Colour, and Cloak, for their rage against him, and persecution of him, *report, say they, and we will report, and we shall take our revenge on him.* *Rivile*, and *persecute*, go together. The Devill playes the same game still, stirs up the prophane generation of men, to bespatter the faithful Ministers of Christ, to speak all manner of evil against them falsely, to brand them for Hypocrites, Traytors, Rebels, *troublers of Israel*, as *Eliah* was; for *pestilent fellows*, as *Paul* was; yea, our Blessed Saviour himself, *Jesus Christ*, is stigmatized by the bloudy Jewes, *Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?* And why all this? As before, to nuzzle up the people in ignorance and unbeliefe,

Mat. 5. 11.
1 *Kl.* 18. 17.
Act. 24. 5.
Jam. 8. 48.

to

incense their rage and fury, and to make an unjust persecution, to look like a just execution. You know the Primitive Christians must first be put into Bears Skins, and then baited with Doggs, and worried. Take away a mans good name, and you take away his life; yea, pursue a dog in the Market, and cry, mad, mad, and every mans hand is up against him, and glad is he that first knocks him down, and kills him.

Thus in general, the Tongue is injurious to others in a way of defamation. Take it more distinctly in these particulars.

Particulars.

1. In its *Tale-bearing*; where-ever they come, talking of this body, or that, what they said, or what they did, and all usually to the prejudice of the parties spoken of. This Tale-bearer usually drives on his Trade, by undertaking to be a great Intelligencer, knoweth what's done in every Corner, and much of his work lieth in revealing Secrets; so *Solomon* tells us, *Prov.* 11. 13. *A tale-bearer revealeth secrets*, and the fruit thereof most an

1. *Tale bearing.*

end, is but the kindling of strife between neighbour and neighbour, friend and friend, *Prov.* 26. 20. So *Solomon* again, *Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out; so, where there is no Tale-bearer, the strife ceaseth. Vers.* 21. *As Coals are to burning Coals, and wood to fire, so is a Contentious man to kindle strife.* And the fruit of both, to wit, Tale-bearing and strife, is most commonly the wounding the good name, the blasting of the Credit and Reputation one of another; which to preserve, and promote, is the scope of the ninth Commandement. For, *The words of a Tale-bearer, are as wounds; and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly, Prov.* 18.8. and 26.22. It's oft in the *Proverbs.* The Tale-bearer is so bad a member in a Common-wealth, as that God himself hath by *Moses* particularly, and expressely enacted a Law against such persons, and their practices, *Thou shalt not go up and down, as a Tale-bearer among thy people.* It's observable, how the word rendred *a Tale-bearer*, may as well be rendred *a Pedler*, and that very

very significantly: for as the Pedler goeth from Town to Town, from House to House with his pack on his back, to vend his wares, and put off the petty things he Trades in; so the Tale-bearer busieth himself, in hearing and speaking of the weaknesses, or miscarriages of others, much to the prejudice and disparagement of those who are spoken of, and little or nothing to the edification or benefit of those who are spoken to; and all upon low, carnal, sinful grounds, and ends: so that the Tale-bearer hath but a bad, a miserable Trade of it. Yet farther, the Holy Ghost in the New Testament, sets a black brand, as black as Hell, upon this sort of Men and Women, and calls them Divels, *false accusers*, or make-bates, 2 *Tim.* 3. 3. for as the Divel accuseth God to man, as to *Adam*; and man to God, as he did *Job*; and is by way of notorious eminency, stiled, *The accuser of the brethren*, *Rev.* 12. 10. So the Tale-bearers work is to accuse men to men; and the truth, is pride, malice, flattery, and self-seeking, are the weights and wheels,

Ainsworth. *on the place.* *Rakil.*

which set this clock, the Tale-bearers Tongue, a going. I might add here, that the credulous receiver of Tales, is as bad as the Tale-bearer; the receiver, as the Theef; both robbing their neighbour of his good name: the one having the Devil in his Tongue, the other in his eare, possibly both in their hearts.

2. *Rash censures.*

2. The Tongue miscarries in reference to others, not a little, *in rash Censoriousness*, as to their words and actions, yea, their persons, and estates, as to grace, and glory; hearing the words of others (let me so express it) with the left eare, observing their actions with the left eye, taking all with the left hand, putting the worst interpretation upon words or actions, looks and gestures, when all that is said, or done, is fairly capable of a good construction, and a good meaning; which construction to give, and meaning to take, is no violation of the royal law of Charity, which, *thinketh no evil, believeth all things, hopeth all things*, to wit, puts the best sense upon words and actions, which they may rationally

1 Cor. 13. 5, 7.

ly bear. For though Charity is neither blind nor fooliſh, to believe all that is ſaid, or hope all that is promiſed; yet Charity *is kind*, makes the beſt of all, that may poſſibly or probably be made. God and Nature hath given us right Eares, Eyes, and Hands, and the grace of Charity doth uſe them, doth all things dextrouſly. But the fouleſt and harſheſt cenſures, are thoſe which are paſſed upon the final ſtate and eternal condition of others, as to ſay, ſuch an one is a reprobate, is damned; and with the Devil: If thou haſt no good grounds for thy hopes, yet what haſt thou for thy deſpaire? ſurely, in theſe ſecret things, thou art not of Gods Counſel; *Rom.* 14. 4. *Who art thou that judgeſt another mans ſervant? to his own Maſter he ſtandeth, or falleth*; is here applicable. *Verſ.* 4.

3. The Tongue, which ſhould be our glory, is certainly a ſhame and diſhonour to men, who mock at, or inſult over others in their infirmities, criminal, or penal: To ſcoff at others for their groſs and ſottiſh ignorance, 3. *Scoffing.*

for their swinish drunkenness, sodomitical uncleanness, or such like, I am sure is none of the vertues or duties commanded in the Decalogue. *Charity*, (or love, which is the sum of the Commandments) *rejoyceth not in iniquity*, 1 Cor. 13. 6. To twit and upbraid others with their natural infirmities, is an high provocation to the most High; witness that dreadful story of the *fourty and two Children mocking* Elisha, *saying*, 2 Kings 2.23,24. *Go up thou bald-head; two shee Bears coming out of the Wood, and tearing them.* One would think their Age, being Children, might have been some extenuation of their fact; and probably ill bred Children, yea, set on by their Idolatrous Parents to deride the Prophet, and that for his baldness; but all this would not excuse them, but wrath is revealed from Heaven against them, in the loss of their lives; or against their wretched Parents rather, in the loss of their Children. Thus to flout at, and in scornful language to trample upon the meaner sort of the people, who have scarce bread to put into their mouths, or raggs to hide their

nakedness,

nakedneſs, is an hainous evil in the ſight of God; *Whoſo mocketh the poor, reproacheth his maker; and he that is glad at Calamities, ſhall not be unpuniſhed*, Prov. 17.5. *Reprocheth his Maker*, to wit, his own Maker, or the poor mans Maker, not owning his ſoveraignty and wiſdome in his various allotments of ſome to wealth, of others to poverty; and in not anſwering God's Holy and gracious ends in his different diſtributions of things below. Thou art rich, thy neighbour's poor, why? not that he ſhould be deſpiſed, but releaved by thee; God made him not to be the object of thy ſcorne, but of thy love, pitty, and bounty. This ſin of rejoycing in the hurt or harmes of others, hath much of inhumanity in it, makes men like that ſycophantizing *Doeg*, who betrayed *David* (as he thought) into the hands of *Saul*, glorying in it, *Pſal.* 52. 1. *Why boaſteſt thou thy ſelf in miſchief, O mighty man?* or like to the accurſed *Children of* Edom, *who in the day of* Jeruſalem (to wit, *Jeruſalem's* diſtreſs) *ſaid, raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof*,

Psal. 137. 7. *Obad.* 10. 9. Or like to the bloudy *Jewes*, who Crucifying the Lord of Glory, did it with most horrid revilings, and barbarous insultations, *Matth.* 27. 40. Or last of all, which is worst of all, this sin makes men as like the Devil, as ever they can look; who if he could rejoyce, would rejoyce in nothing more, than in making men like himself, sinful, and miserable.

4. *Double Tongued.* 4. And lastly, the double-Tongue, speaking one thing to this body, another to that, must needs be a false and faultering tongue, on the one side, or on the other. To be *double tongued*, is blameworthy in all, as well as *Deacons*; as 1 *Tim.* 3. 8. speaking hot and cold, with the same breath. The reason why it is so bad, is, because it argues a double heart in the breasts and bosomes of men. The heart doubles first, and then the Tongue: *Jam.* 1. 8. *A double minded man is unstable in all his wayes*, and in his words also, and Cogitations. This double minded man, is either the dissembler in discourse, who speaks one thing, but thinks another; or rather a sceptick in judgment,

as

as a learned Expositor carries it; a man unsetled, of a doubtful mind, now inclining to this opinion or way, and then to that, not being established in the true Religion: many such were in the primitive times, and are in our dayes also. Yet dissembling in discourse and talke is the evil, which I am here striking at; an evil so prevailing and reigning in *Davids* dayes, as it made him cry out, Help Lord: why? *They speak vanity every man with his neighbour; with flattering lips, and with a double heart do they speak*, or *an heart and an heart*. As of old to have an Ephah and an Ephah, unjust weights and measures, was a great Crime, and is so still; so to have a Tongue and a Tongue, an heart and an heart, is highly displeasing to God and man, and to both very injurious. It was the commendation of the Children of *Zebulun*, 1 Chr. 12. 33. *That they were not of a double heart*, or, *a heart and a heart*. Let it be our temper, and our commendation also. I might adde, that brawlers and liers are as bad as any. But no more of this. *Beza in locum.*

3. Having

3. *In reference to our selves.* 3. Having spoken hitherto touching the Tongues unrulinesse in reference to God, and to our neighbours, I shall say a little of its miscarriage in reference to our selves, and that very briefly.

1. *Self-praising.* 1. In self-praising, magnifying our selves, what we are, as to our birth, or breeding, our parts, and abilities, what we have said, or done, or will do, *Prov.* 20. 6. And all the while the Tongue is wandring from that *excellent way of Charity, which vaunteth not it self, is not puffed up*, to wit, as a bladder with wind is blown up. So the proud hearts of men swell with a windy conceit of their excellencies, bragging and exalting themselves upon all occasions, and in all companies; whereas alas, if they were weighed in the ballance of the Sanctuary, they would be found but light and empty, yea, possibly wretched and miserable Creatures.

1 *Cor.* 13. 4.

1. *Self-Cursings.* 2. In self-Cursings, wishing this or that evill may befall them, yea, that all the Plagues of God light upon them and theirs, if things be not so, and so. But having already harped upon

upon this string, when I spake concerning the Tongues unrulineſs in Curſing; I touch no more upon this, or any other of the Tongues Unrulineſs and irregularities, but haſt forward, to what is moſt in my deſign, and wherein, I muſt crave leave ſomewhat to enlarge; ſhewing (the Lord aſſiſting) the neceſſity and uſefulneſs of Chriſtian Conference, with ſeveral directions for the right management and improvement thereof; ſo as that God thereby *may be glorified*, our ſelves and others edified, and all be upon account with Comfort in that great day of the glorious appearance of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

The neceſſity and uſefulneſs of Chriſtian Conference is evincible and demonſtrable by arguments.

1. In reference to God.

1. There's a neceſſity of precepts upon this commanded duty, command upon command, from God himſelf enforcing it by *Moſes* to *Iſrael*, in De[illegible]nomy, which is a repetition of the L[illegible], particularly and expreſly of the Ten Commandments; which being deliver-

red,

red, he stirs up and excites attention, *Deu.6.3, 4,5,6.* *Hear O Israel*; and again, *Hear O Israel*: what must *Israel* hear? *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*: and what else? *These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart*; and where else? why, in thy mouth; *Deut.4. 10.* *And thou shalt teach*, or *whet them* and sharpen them as Mowers and Barbers do their Instruments, *diligently unto thy Children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up, Deut.* 11. 18, 19. Yea, there is the inculcation of this duty again and again, intimating man's natural averseness and backwardness thereunto; and withall, the infinite wisdome and goodness of God to man in his thus reinforcing it, for their good here, and for ever. This God commands by *Solomon*, the wisest of Kings or men, *Train up*, or *Catechise, a Child, in the Pr.22.6.* *way he should go*, or, *in his way*. Now this training up, or Catechising work, is carried on principally, if not only, by conferring with Children, and talking

king to them about the things of God, and matters of Religion. Yet farther, the Lord our God presseth this duty of Christian Conference more then once in the New Testament by the Apostle, as upon the *Ephesians*, and that both negatively, and positively, *Eph.* 4. 29. *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good, to the use of edifying, that it minister grace to the hearers.* No Corrupt, or rotten putred communication; alluding to meats rotten and putrified, stinking and unsavoury to the Palat, loathsome to the stomack, and hurtfull to the body: so unsavory talke is loathsome to God, and good men, and of it self hurtful to the soules of all the hearers; It corrupts the head with errors, the heart with vile affections, and the life with sinful practises, *1 Cor.* 15. 33. *Be not deceived, evil communication corrupts good manners.* It seems we are apt to be deceived herein, therefore the Spirit prefaceth thus, *Be not deceived*: Positively, *but that which is good*, &c. and hath a tendency for good to the heads, hearts, lives and Conversations of the hearers,

hearers, in it's own nature, and our desigñe, for the advance of knowledg and grace in heads and hearts, holiness and righteousness in the life and conversation of others. To the same purpose, command is given to the *Colossians*, Col. 4. 6. *Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt.* As Salt is a preservative against putrefaction, so is gracious speech against errors and sins, in the heads, hearts, and lives of the hearers. Salt on meats draweth out, drieth up, some think, noxious humors, and renders them more apt for digestion, and wholsome for nourishment. This grace in speech, is that pious prudence flowing from the Spirit of God, which sanctifieth first the heart, and then guides and directs the Tongue and words, and makes them sound and solid, suitable and seasonable, to the Cases and Conditions of others with whom we converse. Remember, salt must be rubbed in, thrust into holes and corners; so speech must be set on with life and warmth by the speaker. But what, must our speech in reference to Children also be with grace, and seasoned with

Learned Davenant on the place.

with salt? yea, why not to Children, so farre as they are subjects capable and recipient of what is spiritual and good? What though the understandings and memories of Children be little narrow vessels, yet, they are every day growing bigger and wider; and they are vessels of God's making, and therefore good, and for good ends and purposes: and if parents and friends do not labour to fill these small vessels, and to season them with the good liquor of Divine and wholsome truths, the Devil and his Instruments, wicked ones will bestir themselves to drop store, great (I can't say good) store of venome and poison into them, possibly for the tainting, sowring, and infecting them, as long as they live. It's God's command, that Parents do *bring up their Children in the nurture, and admonition of the Lord, Eph.*6.4. *To bring up*, that's natural; even the beasts of the field, and fowles of the aire, bring up, feed their young, and cherish them. *In the Nurture*; that moral and rational men, as men, if prudent, will doe: they keep their Children in awe, and

and order; therefore the Apostle adds, *and admonition of the Lord*, that's Christian and spiritual. Christians indeed will instruct their Children in the Principles of Religion, will put good things into their minds, (as the word imports) so farr and so fast as their capacities will take in, and their memories retain. If any demand what Children? at what age must they be instructed? ? All the answer that I will give, is this; the Original word is large, and Comprehensive, takes in all that be born; and why should I straiten, or narrow it? Common reason will suggest, that the Childs capacity must be the parents guide and rule therein; nor is this the taking the Name of God in vain, as some ridiculously may fancy it.

2. Arg. God taketh delight therein.

2. Argument for the promoting of holy conference among Christians, is, that the Lord our God takes much delight (to speak of him as he speaks of himself after the manner of men, in a gracious condescension to our weakness) and pleasure in the spiritual and heavenly communications of his people.

ple. And this argument depends as a consequent upon the former, Gods command. Parents are never better pleased with their Children, nor masters with servants, then when they are upon the work injoyn'd them to do. Yea, each glorious person in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, seem to be much taken with the good language of his people when met together.

1. The Father himself loves and likes it, and takes special notice of it; as in the days of *Malachi*, *Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and thought on his name*, Mal. 3. 16. Then in *Malachi*'s days, which were none of the best, as his Prophecy declares. In that it is said, *The Lord hearkened and heared*, is implied a kind of delight and complacency, which he found therein: as men listen to Musick, vocal, or instrumental, which is melodious and harmonious. Again, in that *A book of remembrance is written it*

1. *The Father.* *Mal.* 3. 16.

imports, Gods taking delight in the words of his people, as men addicted to learning: what they read and hear, which they take delight and pleasure in, they'l book it down, for after use, as occasion shall serve: And probably this place is an allusion to Kings and Princes, who have their State-Scribes and Secretaries to make Records, as of bad services done against them, so of good services done to them and for them, as *Ahasuerus* did *Mordecai's*, Esth. 6. 1. There's not a word spoken for God, his truth, ordinances, day, his ministers or people, that shall fall to the ground and be lost; for God hath an Ear to hear all, and an hand to register and record all; so that all will be upon the account of believers with Comfort in life, and death, at judgment, and to eternity.

2. *The Son.* 2. God the Son, our dear Lord Jesus Christ; holy Conference to him is welcome, and very acceptable. What Christ said to his Church concerning her voice in prayer and praises, is true also concerning her voice in holy speech and Conference, *O my dove, let me hear thy*

thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, Can. 2. 14. and 4. 3,11. And if Christ had not found much content in conferring with Company, why did he the very same day in which he rose again from the dead, associate himself, and that by choice, with the two disciples going to *Emmaus?* he knew full well they were ingaged in good discourse; and whiles they were communing, *Jesus himself drew near, and went with them,* Luk. 24. 15. And to shew how he liked their company, and approved their discourse, he gave them signal tokens of his love towards them, *vers.* 27. *He beginning at* Moses *and all the Prophets, expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself*: the best Divinity *vers.* 32. Lecture, or exposition that ever was made or heard, unless such another made by himself. Yea, he spake to them with authority and power, *so that their hearts did burn within them.* He condescended to their entreaties, and made some considerable abode with them at *Emmaus,* vers. 29,30,31. *He went in to tarrie with them, sat at meat with them, took bread and blessed it, and brake and*

gave to them: and their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight. How they came to know him, and how he vanished, I'le not curiously enquire; It is enough to my purpose, that Christ gave so ample testimony of his approbation of the two disciples, ingaged in their holy talke and conference.

3 *The Holy Ghost.*

3. That the Holy Ghost also is well pleased with Christian Conference among believers, as occasionally they meet together, there's no question. Are not good thoughts the motions, good words the language of the Spirit in believers? and can it be imagined that the blessed Spirit is not delighted in, and well pleased with his own work? with the thoughts he himself puts into the hearts, and words he puts into the mouthes of his Saints and Servants? Again, the Spirit of God all along in Scripture setting a Crown of honour and highest commendations upon the head of Holy Conference, is sufficient demonstration of that delight and contentment which he takes therein: take a few expressions among many, *Pro.* 10. 20.

20, 21. *The Tongue of the just is as choice Silver. The lips of the righteous feed many.* These metaphorical expressions are significant and emphatical: *as Choice Silver*, Silver refined again and again, seven times refined: Silver in it self is precious, but the more purified, the more precious. *Feed many*, alluding to famous house-keepers, men of renowned hospitality, who keep open house, feed many; so the lips of the righteous, by words of sound doctrine, of correction, of instruction, feed the souls of others, which is the best hospitality. *There is Gold* (saith *Solomon* Prov. 20.15.) *and a multitude of rubies; but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.* And our dear Lord Jesus Christ, setting forth the graces of the Church, saith, *Thy lips are like a thred of scarlet, and thy speech is comely*, Song of *Solomon* 4. 3, 11. Once more, in that glorious, eminent, and promised effusion of the Spirit upon the *Apostles*, Act. 2. 3. *Why was the apparition in Cloven Tongues, like as of fire, which sat upon each of them, so that they were filled with the holy Ghost, and began to speak* Gartwright. *in locum.*

with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance? The main and principal design, no doubt, was, the publication, and propagation of the Gospel among the Nations; *for every man heard the Apostles speak in his own language*, vers. 5. 8, 9, 10, 11. Yet a subordinate design might be to provoke all believers; who though they have not the miraculous gift of Tongues, as the Apostles had, yet they all have their measure of the Spirit, and should speak with other Tongues, new Tongues, *be a people of a pure language or lip*, Zeph. 3. 9. and their Tongues should be *Cloven Tongues*, dividing in their talk, between truth and error, good and evill; administring comfort to whom comfort, and terrour to whom terrour belongeth; *Severing between the precious, and the vile*, Jer. 15. 19. *Not sadding the hearts of the Righteous, whom God would not have sadded; nor yet strengthning the hands of the wicked, by promising them life*, Ezek. 13. 22. Yea, *fiery Tongues* also, inflamed with love to God, zeal for his glory, indignation against sin, in our selves or others, as that be-

cause

cause unto God it is so highly displeasing. Surely this heavenly fire of love and zeale in our communication and conference, is kindled from above, by the Spirit, and therefore must of neneſſity be very grateful unto, and acceptable with that blessed Spirit. And so much for the second argument enforcing Christian Conference, upon this ground, because it is so delightful to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

3. This duty of Christian Conference, finds great remuneration from God, and that both here and hereafter. First, in general, as it is the keeping of a command of God, for *in keeping them is great reward*; not onely upon, and after, but in keeping them. Obedience to the commands is an evidence of grace, and for glory, carries with it in the very act, oftentimes an holy and heavenly tranquillity, and serenity of spirit, a chearineſs of heart, as it were wages in the work. *Hannah prayeth*, that's her duty, *and her countenance was no more sad*, that's her reward in hand presently. I knew a young Minister,

3. *Argument, Remuneration of it.*

1: *Inward peace.*

1 Sam. 1. 15, 18.

Instance. who being at a wedding feast, where was much mirth and Musick, also the Fidlers singing Songs, lascivious, scurrilous, and profane enough; the young man being sensible that God was thereby highly dishonoured, had great trouble in his spirit, wonder'd that none would stand up and appeare to rebuke and give check to that disorder; still the jolly Fidler plays and sing on, and the young mans perplexity and indignation goes on still, and was as a fire in his bones, whereupon he whispered in the eare a Minister by him, of more gravity then himself, and one that had more relation to, and authority with the company then he himself had, intreating him to stop that prophaness, but in vaine: the Aged Minister held his peace, the young mans troubles within increased, as fire kindling; and then he break out to this purpose, You Musicians, I am not against your Musick, by instruments, or by voices, but the matter of your songs is such as dishonours God, may probably corrupt and debauch some of the hearers, and doth sad others: he said

said moreover, still with some heat and fervour, probably zeal for God, I do not see any body giving you any thing for your Musick; but if you will be still and gone, I'le give you something for your silence: whereupon the Musicians withdrew, and the young man had tides and flouds of peace and comfort flowing in upon his spirit, the impressions whereof were (as I have heard him say more then once) a refreshing to him many yeares after, and possibly are (if he be yet alive) to this very day. Yea the same Minister oft professed, (and is to be believed, so far as humane Faith, and Charity, (which believeth all things) will carrie us,) that he found such delight and contentment in Christian Conference, that when upon the Road, he fell into company, which was willing to discourse, and though ignorant, yet were willing to learn; it was as pleasing to him, as theives, or high-way-men please themselves, when they meet with a prey, or booty; and seldome mentioned he this, but he gave God alone all the glory. This is a great and a good reward

1 Cor. 13. 7.

ward which the Lord oft gives into the breasts and bosomes of such, as speak oft one to another, concerning the things of God, even joy and peace, *That peace which the world cannot give nor take away*, a kind of touch or taste of that *peace which passeth all understanding*, Phi. 4.7. And thus this *good man is satisfied from himself*, Prov. 14.14.

2. *Estimation with God.*

2. There's a greater, and higher remuneration then this, even in the breast and bosome of God himself, that good estimation they are of with him: *they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts*, Mal. 3. 17. All the world is his, made, preserved, governed, commanded by him; but these are mine, to wit, in a way of special propriety, my peculiar lot, my treasure, my inheritance, my jewels, my children, my spouse, my beloved; such honour, and titles of honour have the Saints, especially such as are active for God, speaking often one to another.

Exo. 19. 5. *Jer.* 51. 19. 1 *Pet.* 2. 9.

3. *Signal advancement.*

3. God often rewards them even in this life, by setting some signal token upon them of his love and favour, which the men of the world cannot but take

take notice of. There was a day, when *they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.* What that day was, or what they said, is not clearly expressed, but may be probably gathered from the Context, and from the History of the Kings Reign in which he propheſied, which lay down plainly how the affaires of Church and State were managed under their Reign, and his propheſie. But when doth God own them in the open face of the World? not presently; yet hath he a set time when he will appear for them, *vers.* 17. *That day* (saith he) *when I make up my jewels*; which refers (as most interpreters carry it) partly at least to this life, to wit, in the day of his Churches Restauration and Reformation. This is one way, and one day, of Gods making up his jewels, in Church reformation, when he turns again *Zions* Captivity, when he maketh, according to his promise, Kings to be nursing Fathers, and Queens nursing Mothers to his *Israel*: When he giveth Judges as at the first, and Counsellors as at the beginning, and to his people Pastors after his own heart, *Mal.* 3. 16.

heart, when purity of Doctrine, Worship, and discipline, is set up and maintained; the will and word of Jesus Christ; in such a fair day Jewels will glister and sparkle, and the Saints and Servants of the living God, usually are advanced, and become the heads, and not the taile: Though God seem to neglect his people, yet he hath a day, a set day, wherein he will throughly plead *Zions* cause, which is indeed his own cause, *Then shall the Lord of Hosts reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously*, Isa. 24.23.

4. *Sparing them.*

4. Such as speak often one to another, God spareth them in his Fatherly indulgence towards them, as a man spares his own Son, that serves him. *Spares, son, and serves*, go together; adoption and sanctification, and find indulgence; such God spares, pardoneth their sins, accepts their services, though tainted with many defects and imperfections, pittieth them in all their afflictions, and temptations, supports, and delivers them, accepts of their good meaning and endeavours, the will for

Ps. 103. 13.

the

the deed; and sometimes remarkably spares them in the black and cloudy dayes of publick Calamity, by the destroying sword in the hands of Angels, or men, in pestilences, or warre. And which notably sets off Gods love, and the Saints priviledge, is, that God so eminently sheweth himself on the side and behalf of his people, that the ungodly world cannot but take notice thereof, to their great admiration, astonishment, and terrour; *Then shall ye* (to wit, the blasphemers) *return, and discern between the righteous, and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.* The Prophets retorts their blasphemies upon themselves, making them their own judges and condemners therein: *Whose words were stout against the Lord, who said, it is vain to serve God; and what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinances? who call the prond happy*, &c. And thus God convinceth obstinate and rebellious sinners of their stupidity and Frenzies, not to their Conversions, but to their horrour, and amazement: and extorts acknowledgments

2 *Cor.* 8. 12.

Mal. 3. 18, 13. 14, 15. *vers.* 18.

ments from the worst of men, not alone of his Soveraignty, but of his wise administrations, how that he is a gracious rewarder of the good, as also a just and dreadful revenger of sin, and sinners. *Psal.* 126. 12. Thus *when the Lord turned again the Captivity of Zion, they said among the Heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them.*

5. Owning them at death and judgment.

5. For the completing of this argument drawn from Gods gracious remuneration of Christian Conference, he doth it not onely here, but will do it more amply and abundantly hereafter, as may be cleared from the words of Christ, *Mat.* 12. 37. *By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.* Justification stands here in opposition to condemnation; and to be justified, is to be absolved, or declared just, not to be made just. Our words and speeches are the declarations and publications of what lieth latent in our hearts, and so are signs and Characters of what we are, good or bad, as well as our deeds and actions: and God hath a book of remembrance

Beza at Pacet *in Loc.*

membrance, as well for what we ſpeak, as for what we do. And when the *book ſhall be opened, and the dead, ſmall and great, ſhall ſtand before God, and be judged according to what is written in theſe books*, then it will be known to all the world what good Communications Gods people have had among themſelves, and that for their honour and renown, before God, the Angels, and their fellow Saints to all eternity. God is, if I may ſo expreſs it, all-eye to ſee all the actions of men, all eare to heare all the words of men, and all hand to regiſter and record all; and not alone good works, but good words alſo, ſhall have a gracious recompence, and reward of glory! Oh that, that's the day, *when God will make up his jewels* (thoſe that ſpake often one to another) compleatly, fully; then indeed the tyde ſhall turne, the Scene Change, the caſe and face of things ſhall ſo be altered, as that the damned reprobates, whilſt howling and roaring among the Divels, *ſhall diſcerne* (little to their comfort, much to their horrour) *between the righteous and the wicked, between him*

Rev. 20. 12.

Mal. 3. 17.

him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. To these three arguments exciting to Christian Conference, in reference to God, his injunction or commanding of it, his remunerations and rewards for it, let me adde another.

4. Gods end in the variety of gifts bestowed.

The fourth Argument which should provoke us to be much in the duty of Christian Conference, is our answering therein Gods great end in his various distribution, of gifts and graces to his Children; which is, that by gracious discourse and holy communication, they might mutually impart each to other for their edification, and spiritual advantage. For the amplification thereof, an apter similitude cannot be used, then that of the Apostle, drawn from a body natural, in which each member hath its proper gift, not for it self onely, but for the whole, and every other member in particular; thus the Eye sees, the ear heares, the Tongue speaks, the hands work, the feet walk, not each for it self onely, but for each other member, and the whole body: so in the Church of Christ, which is one body mystical. Can. 6.9. *My dove, my*

my undefiled, is but one, one body, Can. 6. 9. *Eph.* 4. 4. Yet in that one body there are variety of members, and God by his Spirit distributeth gifts and graces variously, *dividing to every one severally as he will,* 1 Cor. 12. 11. But to what end? He answers it, *vers.* 7. *The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withall.* So in a body politick, a Kingdome or Commonwealth, all are not Peeres, but some Peasants, all are not rich, but some poore; the Peer and the Rich have as much need of the poore Peasant in some cases, as they of them in other cases. So in the world, several Countries have their several commodities, and all to maintain mutual Trade, Commerce, and converse among men, but all for the good of the whole. What another Apostle speaks in another case, in regard of hospitality, is here by way of illustration fairely applicable, 1 *Pet.* 4. 9, 10. *As every man hath received the gift, so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.* There's much, very much of the wisdome and goodness of God, in laying up rich

Perkins *Reformed Catholick.* Of Tradit.

treasures of knowledge, and gracious experiences in the heads and hearts of some, not onely for their own use, but for the guiding and leading of others also. No member in the body natural, or mystical, but is designed to be, and ought to be usefull and serviceable to the whole. The way to compasse our end with God, which is to be everlastingly glorified by him, and with him, in the full enjoyment of him, is to give him his ends here on us, which is that we should glorify him, and that in laying out all our talents to the best advantage of our Master, and the use of his family, which is his Church and people here below; and this end is abundantly advanced, by the wise and frequent exercise of Christian Conference.

1 Cor. 10. 31.

The 5th Argument in reference to God, which pleads hard for Christian Conference, is, that it is powerfully efficacious (by the blessing of God) for the propagation of the Gospel, and for the bearing up of the Name, Worship, and glory of God in the World from generation to generation. How

5: *Argument, propagation of the Gospel.*

was

was the worſhip of God tranſmitted from *Adam* to *Moſes*, but by Oral Tradition, and that in Conference; Fathers declaring to their Children, and ſo from Children to Children, age after age? God at firſt revealed his will to *Adam* by word of mouth; and renewed the the ſame to the Patriarks, not by writings, but by ſpeech, by dreams, and other inſpirations: and thus the word of God went from man to man, for the ſpace of two thouſand and four hundred years, unto the time of *Moſes*, who was the firſt penman of the Holy Scriptures; and all this while men worſhipped God, and held the Articles of their Faith by tradition, not from men, but immediately from God himſelf. And the Hiſtory of the new Teſtament probably for the ſpace of twenty years at leaſt, went from hand to hand by tradition, 'till penned by the Apoſtles; or being penned by others, it was approved by them. And now the Canon of Scriptures being compleated, and by the infinite wiſdome, power and goodneſs of God, kept pure and entire, we muſt *to the law and*

Isa. 8. 20. *Eph.* 2. 20. 2 *Tim.* 3. 16. *to the Testimony*, to the Scripture, the written word of God, for our guidance and direction in matters of Faith and practice. But as for the way and manner of Conveyance and propagation of the heavenly and blessed truths contained in the Scriptures, that is authoratively by Ministers, and by Preaching, hearing, reading, and holy Conference, which is common to all, who having Tongues to speak, should delight to be speaking of God and for God, that so religion, the knowledge and fear of God, might run down all along through the whole race of mankind, even from *Adam* to the end of the world. The Psalmist is warme in this argument, *That* (saith he) *which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us, we will not hide it from their Children, shewing to the generation to come, the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a Testimony in Jacob, and appointed a Law in Israel, which he commanded our Fathers; that they should make them known to their Children: That the generation to come*

Psal. 78. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

come might know them, even the Children which ſhould be born; who ſhould ariſe and declare them to their Children: That they might ſet their hope in God, and not forget the work of God, but keep his Commandments. We pray *Thy kingdome come*, and that's our duty; but we muſt work alſo, and labour to our uttermoſt, by good Conference, by doing, or ſuffering, that the kingdome of grace may be advanced more and more in the world, that God in Chriſt may be more known, believed in, and be loved, obeyed, owned and honoured, by our ſelves, and all others, from the riſing of the Sun to the ſetting of the ſame; and this in a perpetual ſucceſſion from time to time, 'till time runs up into Eternity. Its reported to be one of the Olympick games, that they have a ſet company of Racers, (if I miſtake not the ſtory) each whereof had his ſtage, or Race-poſt, as it were; the firſt takes a great burning torch, or blazing link in his hand, and away he runs with it with all poſſible ſpeed to the end of the race; then another takes it of him, and a-

way he posts with it might and maine; and so a third, and a fourth, and so one Racer after another, 'till the link or light went out. I allude onely to it. So one generation runneth with the light of the Gospel, to another generation, and so from generation to generation, I cannot say till the light goeth out, (for it's an everlasting Gospel, and never goeth out) but 'till the light of grace be heightned unto, or swallowed up in the light of glory. The necessity and usefulness of Christian Conference, in order to the preservation of the Gospel amongst us, and the propagation of it to posterity, may sufficiently be evinced, if we go a little to School to Priests and Jesuites, to all Arch hereticks and seducers; do not they spread their opinions and practices, even among ignorant ones and illiterate, meerly, or mainly by discourse and conference? do not common swearers, adulterers, scoffers, and the like rabble of men, by their evil communications corrupt good manners; and so propagate profaneness to Children, and Childrens Children? and what,

shall

ſhall Antichriſtian and unchriſtian Conference build up the Devils kingdom in the World, even before our eyes, and under our noſes; and ſhall not Chriſtians indeed, real Saints, bethink themſelves, and beſtir themſelves, in promoting and advancing the intereſt and Kingdome of Chriſt by conferring and diſcourſing upon all occaſions, and faire opportunities, and that with good and bad, for the building up the one, and gathering in of the other, and edifying of both? It's pitty, a thouſand pitties, that *England* ſhould run the hazard at leaſt of looſing the Goſpel, for want of ſuch Conference and Communication, as is by God himſelf injoyned, and well becomes the Profeſſors of the Goſpel. Will not our Forefathers riſe up in judgment againſt this preſent generation, and condemn it, ſaying, we primitive Chriſtians, and we their ſucceſſors, have by our Holy Conference, as well as by our Prayers and practice, tranſmitted and handed down the Goſpel to you of this Age: Yea the Martyrs and Confeſſors may ſay, we have ſent the Goſ-

pel purified and refined by, and through our flames, and swimming to you in our blood; and have you now fooled away the Gospel by sinful silence, as to edifying discourse; and by sinfull talkativeness, as to vaine disputations, tending to strife, to the multiplying of rents and divisions? How shall we answer it to God, to conscience, or to the Children yet unborne, if this should be their doleful discourse hereafter. Had not *England* once the Gospel? O yes, in such a Kings, and such a Queens Reigns, *&c.* and what's now become of the Gospel? how comes it to pass that we their sad posterity are thus left in the dark? why, it was not the Lion and the Bear, the Turke, or the Pope, that cut down, or destroyed the Gospel; but it was the little Foxes, the subtile Jesuites, and their Agents and Factors, simple and silly ones by them deluded, yet witty and active enough, to divide the Professors in *England*, and break them in pieces. Now let each believer presently *put on the whole armour of God, praying alwayes*, Eph.6.13, to 18. Prayers and Tears are good weapons;

pons; and among the rest fall roundly upon, and buckle close to, this great duty of Christian Conference; let every one of us say with that Holy man, *Awake, up my glory--I my self will awake early*, Psal. 57. 8. Let our sleepy Tongues, (that instrument whereby God may so much be glorified) awake, arise, get up and be doing, in this great work of Christian Conference, which if well ordered and managed, might be a Compendious way (by the blessing of God) to win all the World to Jesus Christ, which to design and attempt would be one of the best projects imaginable: Let families begin, set up Religion in their Houses, instruct their Children, and so their Childrens Children, that the knowledge, faith, and fear of God may run in a bloud, in a line or pedigree, as *unfeigned faith in young Timothy, but first in his Grandmother Lois, and then in his Mother Eunice*, 2 Tim. 1. 5. and from Families to Parishes, from Parishes to Counties, and so to Kingdoms, and so throughout the World. And this Christian Conference well managed and

Conscienciously improved, would contribute something to the impletion of that blessed prediction, *When the seventh Angel sounded, saying, The kingdomes of this World are become the kingdomes of the Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

Rev. 11. 15.

The sum of what hath been hitherto laid down to demonstrate the necessity of Christian Conference in reference to God, cometh to this; That which God commandeth, delighteth in, rewardeth, and makes for the propagation of his Name and Gospel in the World, is of great necessity and usefulness as to our practice. But Christian Conference is all this, commanded, delighted in, rewarded by God, and doth advance and propagate the glory of God and the Gospel: Therefore Christian Conference is much to be used and practised.

Arg. in reference to men.

The reasons and arguments in reference to men especially enforcing this great duty of Christian Communication, follow, wherein I designe more brevity.

The

The first Argument I take *ab utili*, from the profit that hath been, is, and may be gained thereby: And this kind of Argument from profit, useth to be a very taking prevailing Argument, *There be many that say, who will shew us any good?* Psal. 4. 6. And it is very taking in temporals and Carnals; and should be, I am sure, much more in spirituals, which are an higher, a nobler good. To instance in some particulars. 1. *It is profitable.*

1. It doth *the head* good, by the augmentation of our parts, and heightning our intellectuals, and that partly in a way of natural and moral causality; and partly in a way of benediction, from the Father of lights; who willingly and freely gives in light more abundantly to such, as give out of their light received, to others for their good. Those of an higher forme in the School of Christ may get something from them of a lower form by Conference each with other; those of the stronger sex may be beholden to them of weaker. *Apollo was an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures; yet Priscilla* (the 1. *To the head.*

(the Woman) as well as *Aquila* (the man) *instructed him in the way of God more perfectly*, Acts 18. 24, 26. And it is one of the good properties of that vertuous Woman so commended by *Solomon*, That she *openeth her mouth with wisdome, and in her Tongue is the law of kindnesse*, Pro. 31. 26. It is the judgement of two men of God, now with God, that her speech consisted not about the things of this life so much, (which may be in Infidels) as about holy and heavenly matters; *In her Tongue is the Law of kindness.* Which seemeth to declare both Covenants, of works, and of grace; whereof in the one the bounty of God towards us doth stand; and in the other, our love both towards God, and towards our neighbour for Gods sake is required: for she is not onely a hearer, and reader of the word of God, but also she conferreth thereof with her Children, with her maides, and with her Husband. Yet farther, that the law of kindness, is said to be *in her Tongue*, plainly declareth, how that she often used such good speech, and that it dwelt richly and plentifully

Gartwright *and* Dod *in loc.*

plentfully in her houſe; (*There is that ſcattereth, and yet increaſeth* (ſaith *Solomon*, Prov. 11. 24.) The man that is liberal gets by giving. And *the faithfull Servant*, in the Parable, *who made his five Talents ten, hath the eleventh Talent given him*, Matth. 25. 28. Chriſt adds the reaſon, *verſ.* 29. *for to every one that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have more abundance.* To Trade with our parts, gifts, and graces for the ſpiritual good of others, will be for our own gaine and advantage alſo. By kindling and blowing up zeale in others, we inflame it in our ſelves; by comforting others under their various temptations, we gather experiences whereby we may comfort our ſelves in the like trials. As *the widows Cruſe of Oyl and barrel of meale waſted not by emptying, but filled rather.* And the milke in the Mothers breaſts, which by giving ſuck to the Child continually increaſeth, and not drawn out, drieth up the ſooner. Let's lay out our parts and gifts, as opportunity is offered, ſincerely for God; and to be ſure, we ſhall be furniſhed with gifts and parts graciouſly

ciously from God. Parents do not use to let their Children want books whilst they have a mind to learn; nor Masters their servants to want Tools, or lights, whilst they are willing to work: nor doth the husbandman tilling his ground, let his seeds-men want Corne, when he seeth they will well and wisely sow and scatter it. Thus Christian Conference is not alone beneficial to others, but to our selves, a great augmenter of parts and gifts: I'le give you for the Confirmation hereof, an example of two Women, (to tell you their names, and the places where they lived and died is needless) both well in years, I think forty at least, before they began to mind to purpose the affairs of their souls, and the concernments of Eternity; both were deeply sensible of their gross ignorance, and highly desirous to get knowledge in the things of God: neither of them could read at all, both were industrious: one her eyes being pretty good, learned to read; the other being weak and dim sighted, could not, but she also so bestir'd her self in hearing, Meditation, Prayer, and abundantly

dantly in Christian Conference, putting questions to every one she met with, whom she thought able and willing to instruct her, that she grew eminent (for such an one she was, poor also) in the knowledge and practice of Christianity, and I hope are both long since with God.

2. Christian Conference is not onely profitable for the head (by augmentation of parts) but for the heart also, by the communication of spiritual good things; the best things to the best part, the heart of man: and it's usual with God, to bless Christian Conference, especially where the hearts of speakers do design his glory, the edification and salvation of the hearers, *Paul's* holy temper, design and practice, 1 *Cor.* 10. 33. *I please* (saith he) *all men in all things; not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved:* and his counsel, 1 *Cor.* 14. 12. *For as much as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excell to the edifying of the Church.* If the question be made, what spiritual gifts may be communicated by Conference? I de answer, what not? 2. *To the heart.*

not? the ignorant may be inlightned, the erronious reduced; weak Christians may be strengthned, and the strong established; the worst of sinners may be converted, and the best of Saints quickned, and all edifyed and saved. Take each of these particulars distinctly.

1. *Ignorant inlightned.*

1. That the ignorant may be inlightned, is as clear as the Sunrising turnes the night into day. The word of God not alone preached by ministers in office, ordain'd and commissionated by Christ to that end, but read and discoursed of by private persons, may and doth *make wise the simple*, Psal. 19. 7. *The entrance of thy words*, to wit, when it first openeth the door of the understanding, *it giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple*, Psal. 119. 130. *Pauls preaching* to the *Gentiles*, was, *to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light*, Act. 26. 18. The daily experience that Godly Parents, and governours of families, have as to their Children and Servants brought out of darkness worse then that of *Egypt*, into a *Goshen*, where light abounds, and in them abounds, and that conveighed by Catechizing and Christian

2. For the reduction of erroneous persons into ways of truth, scarce any means more efficacious and successful then that of Christian Conference, for thereby the grounds of mistakes in opinions are detected, and the scruples and doubts lying in mens spirits are discovered, and so answers from Scripture and right reason may be presently, pertinently, and warmly applyed. That of the Apostle speaks, methink, fully to the purpose. *Jam.* 5. 19, 20. *Brethren, if any of you do erre from the truth, and one Convert him: Let him know, that he which converts a sinner from the errour of his ways, shall save a soule from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.* Wherein we may observe, as to our point in hand, whom he speaks to, *Brethren*, even all whom he wrote to: so that to reduce the erroneous in away of fraternal correption, is a duty belonging to all, none exempted; brotherly love constraineth hereunto; for *if I must bring back the straying Ox or Ass of my enemy*, much more the wandring soul of my brother. Again, what *errours* are here to be understood: 2. *Erroneous reduced.* *Exo.* 23. 4.

Marſ. in Plo. no doubt (ſaith a learned Expoſitor) errours in Doctrine, and matters of Faith, and thoſe fundamentall errours alſo, which are in a ſpecial manner deſtructive, and bring death, eternal death unavoidably; and therefore it is ſaid, that *he which converts him, ſhall ſave a ſoule from death*, that is, from Hell and damnation. Now every petty errour about Scholaſtick ſubtilties, is not ſo ſeverely threatned, as fundamental errours and hereſies are, which take off from Chriſt, directly, or indirectly; ſuch unrepented of, bring inevitable ruin and deſtruction: Yet I muſt grant, though errours in Doctrine be principally intended, yet errours in life and practice, are not to be at all excuſed, no not the leaſt ſin, for the leaſt ſin deſerveth death, eternal death, *as wa-*
Ro.6.23. *ges due to it.* But how doth he that Converts a ſinner *ſave his ſoule from death?* not by meriting, or deſerving life for him, or by giving life to him; but by being an inſtrument or means under God to repentance, and ſo into the way of Salvation. And laſtly, how doth he *hide a multitude of ſins?* that he

he doth by being a means to bring him to Christ for Righteousnes, whose Righteousnes alone imputed to us, and so made ours, doth, or can hide our sins, so as they shall never be imputed to us, or charged upon us, *Jer.* 23.6. 2*Cor.*5. 21. *Rom.*5.19. 1 *Cor.*1.30. And surely this work of converting sinners from their errours, of saving soules from death, and of hiding a multitude of sins, is a gallant work; this piece of service is high and noble service; and this hath been, is, and may be done, (by the blessing of God) in a way of Christian converse and Conference. I need not give any farther confirmation by Scripture: the constant experience, not alone of Ministers, but or private Christians, who themselves have been sound in the Faith, and whose hearts filled with a zeal for God, and with love to, and compassion for their erring brethren, and who thereupon have laid out themselves much in Christian Conference with them; I say their abundant experience of good success may save me the labour of farther enlargements herein. Yet

let me drop my mites, and give an instance or two in the case. Though I have been very, very remiss and negligent in taking and improving opportunities in this kind (for which I desire to be humbled in the sight of God and men) yet my being (through grace) sometimes a little active herein, hath not been altogether in vain. I have had occasionally discourse with Papists about Justification by works; with more, touching Salvation by living up to the light within them; with more yet, who hoped to be saved by their good Prayers, serving of God, leading a good life, doing as they would be done by, and the like; several of them in each sort well-meaning people I hope, yet all split upon the same rock, works, works, whereas the Scriptures say expressly, *By the deeds of the Law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight*, Rom. 3.20. And again, *By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of your selves, it is the gift of God: not of works, least any man should boast*, Eph. 2.8, 9. Not to multiply quotations, so well known to all who search the Scriptures, take

but

but one more, *Tit.* 3.5. *Not by works of righteousnes, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy Ghost.* It is (*by*) as the way, not *for* as the deserving and meritorious cause of salvation, that is *Christ, and none but Christ*, Act. 4. 12. But to instance a little for Papists; I know not any by me reduced, I hope many are by others, and I rejoyce therein, and bless the Lord for it. For the second sort, who expect Salvation by living up to the light within them (a generation of men as much to be pitied, prayed for, and tenderly dealt with, as any, who by reason of some opinions and practices lie under the wrath of men, and for others, without breach of Charity, we may say, lie under the wrath of God) onely one I can speak of, a fellow passenger with my self and others in an hackny Coach from St *Albans* to *London*, who after long and warme disputes, at length ingeniously confessed, that no righteousnes but the righteousnes of Christ imputed to us, could availe for satisfaction

to God the Father, nor for our justification and salvation, or to this effect. For the third sort, those who hope to be saved by their good prayers, their serving God, and so forth, think, and profess they think, their repentance and good deeds for time to come, will make amends for their bad deeds in time past, and make satisfaction to God for all that formerly hath been done amiss by them: I hope by the good hand of God upon weak endeavours, (the whole of glory be the Lords) many have been plucked out of this snare of the Divel. I perceive this work groweth upon my hands, take but one instance therefore. There was some few years since, a young gentlewoman, who waited on a Lady in a Noble mans family, who passing by Coach with others and my self from *Barnet* to *London*, upon discourse I soon found that this young woman had a devotion, and a zeale for God, cared not for vain frothy Company, gave her self to reading Scriptures, and good Books, she was well read, talked willingly and understandingly; at last

discoursing

discourſing with her, and putting queſtions to her touching Juſtification, I perceived, ſhe built much upon works, and a legall righteouſneſs; whereupon my bowels yerned towards her, and I told her in plain termes I feared ſhe was not yet in the way of life and Salvation, and I ſpake as ſeriouſly and pertinently as I could, ſhewing the inſufficiency of all our own righteouſneſſes, and the impoſſibility of juſtification, life and ſalvation to be had by the deeds of the Law; and withall opened the Covenant of grace to her, how that it was Chriſt, and he alone, that was made under the Law to redeem them who were under the Law; of the fulneſs and ſufficiency, and alſo willingneſs and readineſs in him to ſave us: and to this effect I diſcourſed about half an hour together; and perceiving that ſhe had pulled her hood over her face, and was weeping, I held my peace; dropping a few words ſometimes; at length, ſhe breaks out in expreſſions to this purpoſe; Now Sir, I ſee the mind of God towards me this day, which is to bring me off from that ſandy foun-

dation of works which I have been building upon this many a day, and to bring me to free grace in Jesus Christ, so setting me upon that rock which is higher then I; and I bless the Lord that I saw your face this day, that I fell into your company; the good I hope I have received from you will stick by me and comfort me as long as I live. I hear and believe that her Conversation ever since hath not been a dishonour to her profession, and that she hath not hinder'd the advance of Religion at all in that noble family, but a means to promote it rather.

3. *Rebellious converted.*

3. That Christian Conference may be useful, and availeable even for the Conversion of obstinate and rebellious sinners, I make no question; the place forecited abundantly proves it: for whereas the Apostle saith, *Jam.* 15.19, 20. *He that converteth a sinner from the errour of his way*; by *sinner* we must needs take in such as are vicious and flagitious in life and conversation, as well as one *erring from the truth*, persons erronious and Heretical. Again, *Pauls* injunction *Eph.*4.29. *Let no rot-*

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ten communication proceed out of your mouth, but such as may Minister grace to the hearers: and why not Converting grace ministred, and regeneration work wrought even by Christian Conference? This I may safely say, that the Ministers of Christ, have been not only by the publick Preaching of the word, but by private Conference, very instrumental under God in the converting many souls to righteousness; and the ground hereof to me is plain and obvious, because Christ setteth them apart on purpose for that work, *and gave gifts to men*, Eph.4. 11, 12, 13. *He received gifts, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them*, Ps.68, 18. And though private Christians and Ministers speak the same words, yet there's this difference, that what private Christians say in Conference, comes from fraternal Charity; what the messengers of Christ say, comes from speciall ministerial authority; and their discoursing about matters of Religion is properly enough preaching, and hath been eminently instrumental for the Conversion of many

ny from darkneſs to light, and from the Kingdome of Satan unto God. Experiments herein I believe are frequent and uſual, through the bleſſing of God, and his *Chriſt*; who by promiſe hath freely and graciouſly engaged himſelf *to be with his Goſpel-miniſtery to the worlds end*, Mat. 28. 19, 20. Let me leave you but one inſtance, which may by the Lords bleſſing be an incouragement to this too much neglected duty of Chriſtian Conference. There is an honeſt able Miniſter, who within theſe two years told me it for a piece of News, (and indeed it was welcome newes to me) and it was this, That in the Knights Family with whom he liveth (the Knight is of good quality and repute) there was a maidſervant, he verily believed fearing God *in that family*, which (to uſe his own words) dated her Converſion from my diſcourſe with her, walking up *Highgate* Hill together, whereupon I remember'd that about four years ſince I came from *London* in an Hackny-Coach for St. *Albans*, and there was a Gentlewoman (I'le ſpare her name) with this her maid, and

and others; the Gentlewoman was able, and willingly maintained good discourse on the way; and it being a cold morning, I at the bottom of the Hill went out of the Coach, to walk up the Hill, and warm my self thereby; when I was out, the Maid asked leave of her Mistris (who stayed in the Coach) that she being cold might go up the Hill also, which she did; and we talked together as we went; and I think the summe of my discourse was our misery by nature, our disability to help our selves by any thing we could do or suffer, that there was an absolute indispensable necessitie of getting an interest in Christ, who was infinitely able and willing to save every poor lost soul that came unto him by believing; and to this purpose, both in Coach and in walking: which the onely wise and infinitely gracious Lord God it blessed for the Spiritual and Eternal good of this poor handmaid; for which let his Holy Name be for ever glorified, and let all good Christians take from hence incouragement to be yet more and more abounding

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in holy talk and Conference, sowing this seed in the morning, and in the evening notwithholding their hands; who knoweth but the gracious Lord our God, may bless and prosper, both the one, and the other.

The weak strengthened.

And fourthly, if the Holy Word of God rightly managed in Christian Conference be efficacious for the inlightning of the ignorant, the reducing the erronious, and the converting of stout-hearted sinners, then by necessary and undeniable consequence, it must be also soveraignly efficacious for the strengthening of the feeble minded, and comforting of such as are cast down, 1 Thes. 5. 14. *Brethren, comfort the feeble minded*, concernes all; and how can this be better done then in Christian Conference? and again in the same place, *support the weak*, is the common duty of all believers: but how support? even as a Crutch doth a lame body, or as a beame doth a ruinated and tottering house; the word significantly imports, the holding up one thats ready to fall, by a hand reached out to help him, or the assisting any who are lifting

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and heaving at what's weighty, but have not ſufficient ſtrength to move or remove it, as they deſire. Thus by Chriſtian Conference, many gracious ſoules full of doubts and fears, ready to fall into dreadfull deſpairs of mercy, have been held up, and cheared, ſometimes by laying before them the precious promiſes, or the great ability and willingneſs of Chriſt to ſave, ſometimes by imparting to them our own experience, how we were caſt down and raiſed up again, telling them what God hath done for our Soules, or for the ſoules of others in the like ſad and dejected condition as they are in. I'le leave one inſtance in this caſe alſo; It's near twenty years ſince, that ſeveral Travellers of us paſſing between *Oxford* and *London*, ſupped together at an Inne in *Great-Wickham*, one of the company carried himſelf ſo untowardly and offenſively, that others at the Table wondered at me for my not rebuking him; whether thinking it prudence to forbear at ſupper time, or rather through my want of zeale for God, I know not, but ſupper being fully ended,

ded, I addreſſed my ſelf, as well as I could, to ſpeak to this vaine perſon, which accordingly I did, laying firſt the Law before him, and the ſadneſs of his condition at preſent, and that, if he died impenitently, he was like to periſh eternally; after which I opened the Goſpel to him, with as much tenderneſs and compaſſion as I poſſibly was able, acquainted him with the readineſs that is in God and Jeſus Chriſt to receive penitent ſinners; and how thoſe that came to Chriſt, he would in no wiſe caſt out; and many ſuch expreſſions to this purpoſe, that grace diſcovered might win and allure him to Chriſt, and to repentance. Yet what impreſſion all that was ſpoken had upon that vain perſon, I know not. It ſeems that there was a Scholler in the Company, whom I think then I was altogether unacquainted with, he is now an honeſt able Miniſter, who lay under a ſpirit of bondage, had great feares and troubles upon him, he hearken'd attentively, and I have cauſe to be perſwaded, that by the wiſe and gracious providence of God, much of the Goſ-

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pel Conſolations fell upon his ſpirit, to his great refreſhing, not unlike that ſpirit of Adoption which teacheth believers to Cry *Abba, Father*: you ſhall have his own words in a late letter to me: *This I can unfeignedly ſay, that amongſt my ſpiritual benefactours, I do heartily bleſs God for you, and do look upon it as a very good providence, I was caſt into your Company at that time.*

In the fifth and laſt place, That Chriſtian Conference hath been and ſtill is very beneficiall, not only for ſtrengthning thoſe who are weak in the faith, but for edifying and quickning, even the ſtrongeſt, and moſt grown in Chriſtianity; the Holy Scriptures, right reaſon, and ſweet experience, give in abundant teſtimony thereunto. It's a Soveraign antidote againſt Apoſtacy, and defection in Religion, and that both as to underſtanding and affections: The Apoſtle preſcribes it *Heb.* 312. 13. *Take heed brethren, leaſt there be in any of you, an evill heart of unbeliefe, in departing from the living God:* But how ſhall it be prevented? he anſwers, *Exhort one another dayly, while it is called to day, leaſt,*

5. *The ſtrong quickend.*

leaſt any of you be hardned through the deceitfulneſs of ſin. Exhort one another: The duty is mutual, concerneth Chriſtians of all ſexes and ſizes: *dayly*, that is frequently, not by fits, and ſtarts: *while it is called to day*, to wit, preſently, and ſpeedily, delayes in this caſe are dangerous, do not put off for a month, a fortnight, a week, no not for a day, and the reaſon is weighty, from the danger of the hearts obduration, *by the deceitfulneſs of ſin*: It deceiveth the underſtanding with errour for truth, darkneſs for light, the will with evil for good, the heart and affections, with what's lothſome and to be abhorred, inſteed of what's lovely and to be deſired. And again the ſame Apoſtle to the ſame purpoſe, *Heb.* 10.23,25. *Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith; Not forſaking the aſſembling of our ſelves together, as the manner of ſome is:* how ſhall this be helped? he anſwereth, *but exhorting one another* &c. Chriſtian Conference well ordered, is an excellent preſervative of truth, and peace, in the Church or Churches of Chriſt; and good talke, be it Table-talke, or High-

High-way talk, hath been, is, and (by the bleſſing of a gracious God) will be as a golden Pipe of Conveyance, of much ſpiritual good from one to another, until time run up into Eternity, and grace into glory.

Having ſomewhat largly diſcovered the profitableneſs of Chriſtian Conference, in that thereby believers abundantly Communicate ſpiritual good things one to another; let me add

3. It's peaceableneſs. It's a teeming Mother, bringing forth peace at home and abroad, within doores and without. *3. Arg. It's peaceableneſs.*

1. Peace at home. Chriſtian Conference is attended uſually with ſweet inward peace, and an heavenly tranquillity of ſpirit; I appeal to your Conſciences herein. When you lie down in an evening, and reflect upon your ſelves, look inward, and make inquiry, what have the thoughts of my heart, the words of my mouth, and the actions of my hands been this day? (as I preſume they who keep their watch do) and ſome Heathens by Natures light have done) when you find your language and diſcourſe hath been *1. Peace at home.*

to this person, or that, holy and spirituall, and that upon this design, to edifie and minister grace to the hearers; surely the fruit thereof hath been a Calme in thy soule, and serenity in thy spirits. Peace also not alone at the end of each day, but at the end of life. It was a chearing, a reviving Cordial to that good King *Hezekiah*, when he lay (as he thought) a dying, to be able to say, *Remember now O Lord, I beseech thee, how I walked before thee in truth*, Isa. 38. 1, 2, 3. And so to be able to say, and that from the heart sincerely, Remember O Lord, how I have talked before thee, and for thee, in thy despised truths, ordinances, and Ministers, how I have in discourse at least (and by example also) contended for thy holy Sabboths, so profaned by a sinfull generation; and in brief, I have, (as all *sanctified* ones, and *called* of God are exhorted) *earnestly contended for the faith*, (or doctrine of faith) *once delivered to the saints*, *Jude* v. 3. The word is emphaticall, and imports such eagerness in contention, as is among wrestlers and racers striving for victory. Remember

ber O Lord how I have contended with thee by Faith in Prayer, for that faith, the true Christian faith by thee delivered; and how I have contended with erronious persons and Hereticks by arguments and by practice, bearing up those truths and ordinances which they pull down: surely the remembrance hereof when we go to bed, night after night; or when we are going to make our beds in the dust to be no more seen, will speak much peace and comfort to us. And the reason hereof is strong and weighty, because good conference, if right in the spring, flowing from an heart fired with zeal for God, and love to my neighbour; and right in the ends, it designes Gods glory, and the good of the hearers; is a cleare evidence of a good and gracious heart; and grace makes way for peace, as the needle for the thred, so that those who much lay out themselves in Christian Conference, have, or may expect to have, yea be sure, first or last, shall have much inward peace and tranquility of spirit. Who would not sow good seed, when he knows it will

grow? who would not be ſcattering words of grace, when he knoweth, that every ſuch word hath a ſeed of peace, yea of eternal peace in it?

2. *Peace abroad.*

2. Chriſtian Conefrence not onely brings forth inward peace and quiet in our breaſts and boſomes, but alſo outward peace with men, and ſafety in all places and companies whatever. Set you on foot good diſcourſe, or run it on, and whoever is preſent, there's no great danger, unleſs it be of a taunt, or flout from a prophane *Eſau*, or a ſcoffing *Iſhmael*; and that a good honeſt ſoul may weare as a Crown of honour, as *Job* ſpeaks of himſelf, *Job* 31. 35, 36. *My deſire is, that my adverſary had written a book: ſurely I would take it upon my ſhoulder, and bind it as a Crown to me.* (*Upon my ſhoulder,*) not as a burden, but as an honour; as ſtandard-bearers carry their enſignes and colours, that all may ſee them. Tongue-perſecution (ſuch as *Iſmael's* was of *Iſaac*) breaks no bones, but brings under the *bleſſing of God, and the promiſe of a great reward*, Gal. 4. 29. Gen. 21. 9. Mat. 5. 11, 12. No, no, the danger in diſcourſe

discourse, is not whilest we are talking of God, or of Christ, or of the Spirit, or of regeneration, and the like; but the danger comes when you begin to talk of persons, this body or that; either highly and hyperbolically praising one, and that smells of flattery, and is possibly, by some who are present, so accounted; or dispraising another, and that's presently suspected of uncharitableness, if not of malice. The danger is farther heightned, when in your discourse, you'l needs be medling with Authority, and State-affairs; how soon then may the Tongue be found tripping, and you thereby but trip up your own heels, and catch a fall, possibly such a fall, as may break your bones, if not your neck. So the wisest of Kings tels us, *Pro.* 13.3.& 21,23. *He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips, shall have destruction.* Wherein he seemeth to compare man to a City besieged with enemies round about, the safety whereof consisteth much in the well ordering the gates, duly and wisely opening and shutting them. Man is this

City; his mouth the gate prudently open'd by speech, or shut by silence, is his protection and safety; negligence and imprudence therein, oft proves his ruin and destruction. That natural principle of self-love, should make this argument from self-preservation and safety, to be of force and prevalency with us. The better and more spiritual our discourses and conferences are, the more's our safety: It concernes us at all times to weigh our words well, but especially when the company we are in is bad, or somewhat dubious,

Ps. 39. 1. and to be suspected: Thus holy *David*, *I said, I will take heed to my ways that I sinne not with my Tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle*, (or a Muzzle) *while the wicked is before me.*

Ainsw. To conclude this Argument, I have heard of a Sect called Trapanners (unknown I presume to our honest Forefathers, both name and thing) men skilful and active to intangle and ensnare others in their talke; I would hope that they are now dead and gone: but if hundreds of them should be yet alive and with you and me in a room, and hear us discoursing

sing of nothing but faith, repentance, love, and good works, and the like, methinks we need not much to fear them; innocence would be our protection, or rather God and his Christ our shield and buckler.

In the fourth and last place, Christian Conference is not onely beneficiall in point of peace and safety, but in point of honour also: many a carnall man having heard or overheard spiritual discourse among the Saints and Servants of God; though this language of *Canaan*, he neither understandeth, nor relisheth much; yet it leaves an honourable conviction upon his spirit, and he is half perswaded, that these men have something of God in them, more then he hath. But surely all who are really good themselves, cannot but put an high value and estimation upon the persons and practices of those, who are much in holy and heavenly Communication. Yet if all men should disregard, to be sure the holy and gracious Lord our God will have regard; and to have honour of him, and with him, is the highest honour desireable, or imaginable.

4. *Arg. Honour and Credit.*

was of a communicative spirit, very ready, and resolute, in the imparting good to others, in any way of counsel and Conference; and maketh this expresly the ground why he honoureth *Abraham* in the revealing of Secrets unto him, *Gen.*10.17,19. *And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? for I know him, that he will command his Children, and his houshold after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.* It is an high honour to be a Privy Councellor to Kings and Princes; O then, what an honour is it to be admitted and advanced (as it were) to be of Councel to the King of Kings, whose Supremacy and Soveraignty is over Heaven and Earth? Before I go off, let me hint this by way of Caution, that when we speak, or rather Scripture it self speaketh of Councel in reference to God, or of Gods acting upon Counsel, it is not to be understood properly: for to act upon Counsel, that implies Consultation, and Consultation a defect in knowledg (which to fancy concerning God would be high and horrid

rid Blasphemy) but to be understood of God after the manner of men; the wisest of men act upon Counsel: now because all that God doth, is infinitely well and wisely done, therefore he is said to act by Counsel, as men do; But I have done with this great Argument, to press Christian Conference, drawn from its profitableness and usefulness; it's beneficial to the heads of our selves and others, in the augmentation of gifts and parts; to the hearts of our selves and others, in the communication of, and receiving of spiritual good several ways, beneficial in regard of inward peace at home in our own Consciences, and outward peace abroad, with men, amongst whom we live; & which crowns all, it hath a marke of honour set upon it by the hand of God himself: & he whom God honours, is honourable indeed.

Hitherto the Arguments exciting to Christian Conference have been deduced from the duty we owe to God, and man, our selves, and others, and so from the ten Commandements; some other arguments may fairly be drawn from the Creed, or the Articles of our Christian Faith.

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1. *Arg.* *The Communion of Saints.* As first, We profess we believe the Communion of Saints; Now Christian Conference rightly managed is a considerable part of that Communion; so that to deny or neglect Holy Conference, is to deny, or neglect one of the Articles of our Faith, and so farr to Unchristian our selves. Christian Conference is a Gospel duty, as it hath been proved by expres testimonies out of the word of God: and it's a Gospel priviledge: none indeed but such as *receive the Gospel*, are savingly wrought upon by the Gospel, can carryon discourse, or Conference, which for matter and manner, is truly Christian; and in truth, society is scarce desireable, without mutual Colloquy, and speaking one to another; to have a company of people meet together, and be as mutes and dumb, all in deep silence, methinks is a very uncomfortable meeting, and irrational. Solitarines and being alone fits best for meditation and musing. Society and being in Company calls for speech and language. What humane Society can be among men, as men, without Conference? or what Christian so-

Mat. 11. 6.

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ciety among Saints, as Saints, without Chriſtian Conference? to what end hath God and nature given us Tongues, ſpeech and language, but to glorifie him therewith, and to edifie one another? and that's mainly done in the way of Chriſtian Conference. Yet farther, it's one of the branches of the Communion of Saints, to keep others in the right ways of truth, and holineſs; and a likely means conducing thereunto, is to be much in good diſcourſe with others. It's hard to keep the way when one's alone, for man by nature is apt to wander. Many Travellers together may help to guide one the other, to keep from falling, or to raiſe up if fallen. *Two are better then one* (ſaith the Preacher, *Eccl.*4. 9,10.) *for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but wo to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.* Great is the benefit of Society, from that natural helpfulneſs, which thereby one man affordeth to another. When the Lord imployed his ſervants in high works, he uſually ſent them Two by Two, *Moſes* and *Aaron*, *Joſhua* and *Zerubbabel*, in reference

reference to whom, we read of *Two witnesses*: and our Lord Jesus Christ when he sent forth his Disciples, they went Two and Two; and why this? Not onely that they might be joynt witnesses of the truth of the Doctrine, and messages delivered, but withall, that they might with more ease and success carry on the Ministery and work wherein they were imployed, and help mutually to strengthen, to encourage, and comfort one the other. The instance given, is pertinent to our purpose, *for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow.* What fall? why society is helpful in all kinds of falls, as corporal, in a journey, on foot, or horse-back; or falls into diseases, dangers, temptations, sins, errours; the society of friends is useful, to pitty, to support, to restore, to convince, to comfort, and every way to Minister sutable supplies and relief. To close up and strengthen this argument, in that Christian Conference, as it is a part of the Communion of Saints by special promise, *Psal.* 133. 1. *Behold, how good, and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity.*

Cohabitation

Cohabitation, or dwelling together, is insignificant without Communication, and Conversation becoming the Gospel; and why so good, so pleasant? *vers.* 3. *For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.* The illustration whereof the Psalmists gives, in two lively and emphaticall similitudes: *vers.* 2. *It is like precious ointment upon the head of Aaron.* It was not the ointment in the box or vial stopped, but poured out, that gave the fragrant savour, and was so odoriferous: it is not grace in the heart (though that is saving) but grace in the lips and life, which makes a Christian indeed so sweet and savoury. *Aaron* in his ointments going about, was as a Pillar or Cloud of perfumes walking, leaving a sweet scent and smell behind him: such are Christians indeed in their Communications and Conversations, in all places and companies, into which the hand of Providence leadeth them. The other similitude is also very elegant and expressive, *As the dew of Hermon*, &c. *vers.* 3. The dew on the earth is a refreshing, makes it moist, soft, and fruitfull:

full: such in an higher, nobler, and more spiritual way, is Christian Conference, well and wisely managed, to hearers who are humble, conscientious, attentive, docil, and tractable.

2. *Arg. The day of Judgment.*

A second argument moving to Christian Conference, in relation to the Creed, and things to be believed, is fairly and strongly deducible, from that great and dreadful day of judgment wherein an account must be given as well of words, as of actions, before that righteous Judge, the Lord Jesus Christ; who hath foretold us, *that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of Judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be condemned.* An idle word is that which in it self hath no tendency to the edification of speaker or hearer, to profit men, or honour God. Christ, our great Lord and Master, entrusteth men as stewards with much treasure, to be laid out for their Masters use: part whereof is that of the Tongue and language, which certainly he will call men to an account for; and if for idle words; then surely for reviling bitter and slandering words

Mat. 12. 26,27.

Par. in loc.

words againſt the righteous ones, his ſervants and Children, Miniſters, or people. Now ſome ungodly men think, that the worſt words of their mouths are too good for them, calling them hypocrites, diſſemblers, factious, ſeditious, traytors, rebels, and what not? *ſpeaking all manner of evil againſt them falſly*, or *lying*, and *reproachfully*, Mat. 5. 11. But they will be of another mind another day, when Chriſt cometh, 1 *Pet.* 4.14. *And behold, the Lord cometh with ten thouſands of his Saints, to execute judgement upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodlily committed, and of all their hard ſpeeches, which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken againſt him*, Jude 14.15. By the way obſerve, that what evill is done to, or ſpoken againſt Chriſts little ones, he looketh upon as done to, or ſpoken againſt himſelf; but that which is principally to our purpoſe, is that Chriſt will then *convince* ſinners, force them to know and acknowledge that their ſpeeches of and againſt the righteous, were hard ſpeeches; and that conviction will be a

dreadful

dreadful and terrible Conviction, he will convince them with a witness, before all the world; convince them with a vengeance; convince them by the flames of Hell, a dreadful dismal and everlasting conviction indeed, but very just and righteous. They would not be convinced by the cleare, sweet and pleasant light of the word, Law or Gospel, to their humiliation; therefore they shall be convinced by the fire of Hell, though to their terrour, and confusion. As some letters writ with joyce of Lemons or Onions are not legible by common day light; but held to the fire, and a little scorched, are legible enough: so sin and guilt in the Consciences of some wretched sinners, are never read by the common-light of the word; but when their Consciences are held close to the flames of Hell, and well scorched, then will they, nill they, their sins and guilt are made clearly legible and visible unto them, filling them with everlasting horror, with shame and confusion of face for ever: O the sad and doleful reckoning that sinners will make before that dread-

full

full Tribunal and Judgment seat of Jesus Christ for words onely (to pass by thoughts and actions) then Conscience, throughly awaken'd, and terrified, will be forced to speak, and speak out, accusing poor lost sinners; *Imprimis*, for idle words, multitudes, multitudes, even innumerable; *Item*, for lying, scoffing, slandering, defaming words against the Saints of the most high God; *Item*, for Cursing, Swearing, yea blasphemous words against the most High God himself, taking his Name in vaine, all the day long; and each of these by hundreds, thousands, yea possibly millions; O, What will the total sum amount unto! tremble sinner, tremble to imagine. To Close up this, we read in the parable of *Dives* and *Lazarus*, Luk. 16. 24. *That the rich man in Hell* complains particularly and especially *of his Tongue*, how that was *tormented in the flame*. An ancient Writer gives this reason, his Tongue was that member which most sinned, and therefore that had the sharpest torment. Thus we see how the bad words of wicked men will be re-

membred and repeated to their ſhame and anguiſh at the laſt day; and no queſtion the good words of the righteous ſhall not be forgotten, *They ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance*, Pſal. 112. 6. and their words alſo, as the Prophet teſtifieth, *Mal.* 3. 16. *They that feared the Lord ſpake often one to another, and a book of remembrance was written with him:* God booked down every word they ſaid; O what great encouragement ſhould this give to all that fear God, to be much in ſpeaking of God, and for God, to and with one another. What, ſhall the great and glorious, good and gracious Lord God Almighty, vouchſafe to write down every good word which droppeth from us, and ſhall not our lips drop apace, and that as the Hony-comb, the ſweeteſt words imaginable, tending to the glory of God, and good of men? did we indeed believe this one truth, O how would it ſet all our Tongues a going? how would every one ſtrive, who ſhould talke moſt, and ſpeak faſteſt? vying as it were, and contending which of us ſhould have the moſt words in

Chriſts

Christs book at the day of his appearance. Its unbelief friends, it's unbelief, which makes us so Tongue-tied, tieth up the strings both of hearts and Tongues. Let's get, yea the Lord give us more faith, and then we shall be more talkative, in a good sense, and to good purpose; and so God will be more honoured, and our neighburs edified; we and they shall have more heights of grace here, and weights of glory hereafter. I will Close up this argument with *John's* Vision, *Rev.* 20. 12. *I saw the dead*, saith he, *small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things, which were written in the books, according to their works.* Alluding, I suppose, to the manner of judiciarie proceedings by Judges, who have depositions upon record. Judge according to the Laws of the Land, and matters of fact, cleared to them by allegations and proofs: this still remembring, God needeth none of these records or books, but condescending to our capacities, he is pleased to speak

of himself after the manner of men. What the books are that shall be opened, is not fully agreed upon; some think, the Books of the Old and New Testament, wherein God hath prescribed what was to be done by men, and what not to be done; and that because the Apostle saith, *Rom.* 2. 16. *In that day, when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel.* Others, by the books, understand the Consciences of men, which shall then be fully opened, and the secrets of all hearts be revealed: so that none shall be able to complain of injury done him, or injustice in God. Because every mans Conscience shall excuse or accuse, absolve or condemn him, and give him clear and full information, whether he did indeed, or did not believe in Jesus Christ, Faith in Jesus Christ being the only condition of the New-Covenant, *Mar.* 16. 16. *He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned. To preach this, is to preach the Gospel.* Which of these two Books shall be opened, I dare not determine; why not both, Scriptures,

and Conſciences? but theres' mention of *another book to be opened*, which is expreſly called, *The Booke of Life*: to wit, in which God from Eternity hath written the names of thoſe who ſhall be ſaved by Jeſus Chriſt, which is frequently ſpoken of in the *Revelations*: Not that God needs or hath a Book; it would be ſimplicity and blaſphemy, to fancy it; but it is ſo expreſſed after the manner of men, to ſhew the certainty of Predeſtination, immutability of Election, and the Infallibility of the Salvation of Gods Elect. But I forget what I have in hand. Can we rationally immagine, that when the book of Conſcience is opened, words will not be as legible as works? yea not only works, and words, but thoughts alſo, *and every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil:* wherein Scripture is ſo expreſs, *Eccl.* 12.14. 2 *Cor.* 5.10. O let us remember and lay to heart, that at the laſt day, it will be known to all the world what good Communication the Saints have had, and what bad the ſinners; it's matter of Conſolation to the one, but of Terror to the

Rev. 3.5. 13.8. *chap.* 17. 8.

others: Let us all fear and tremble before this great and glorious Lord our God, who taketh most exact notice of every word we speak, and will, no question, call us to an account for what good or hurt we have done by our words and communications, as well as by our works and actions; let this be as a bitt orbridle in out mouths to curb and restraine us from vaine and sinful language, and yet be as a spur in our sides to put on, quicken, and mend our pace in holy, heavenly, and Christian Conference.

I have been much larger than I intended, yet I would well hope not too large, in arguing for the advance and increase of Christian Conference amongst such as profess Christianitie. Let my closing Argument be drawn from the vulgar example, and popular practice of the men of this World, in their several ways and imployments, how they manage and promote their affairs by discoursing and conferring together. The Merchants on the *Exchange*, how do their Tongues run by Sea and Land, to the *Indies*, East and West; to both the

Last Arg. vulgar practice.

the Poles, North and South; yea, all the world over, where any thing is to be got by trade and merchandize: and ſhall not Chriſtians, who, if Chriſtians indeed, are wiſe Merchants, ſpeak freely and rejoycingly of the *goodly Pearls which they have bought*; and of *that Pearl of great price* (Jeſus Chriſt) *which they have have found* (through grace and mercie) and of their ſpiritual merchandize, better than that of Gold and Silver? ſhall your Heirs to Nobles and Princes, talke, and love to talke, of what is theirs in reverſion, of Earledomes, Dukedomes, Crowns, and Kingdomes? and ſhall not Chriſtians diſcourſe, and love to diſcourſe, of what is theirs in reverſion, of Crowns of Glory, of that heavenly Kingdome? how they bring Children, *are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jeſus Chriſt*, Rom.8. 17. and of their *inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for them*, 1Pet. 1.4. This is *to have our Converſation in heaven*, Phil.3.20. For heavenly Communication is uſually a fruit of heavenly Meditations and affections; and the *Mat.*13. 45.46.

language

language of *Canaan* (if not forced and hypocritical) is a Comfortable evidence of our interest in that Celestial *Canaan*, and heavenly *Jerusalem*, which is above. Again, shall Countrymen, in a strange place, delight to be speaking of their native soile, their Fathers house, the good Company and Society there? 1 *Pet.*2.21. and shall not believers, who are strangers and Pilgrims here, delight to be speaking of Heaven, willingly and readily, with a kind of supernatural naturalness, as being their native Country, because *born from above*, Joh.3. 3. Heaven born, delight to be speaking of their *Fathers house*, *where are many mansions*, Joh.14. 2. and of that sweet, invaluable sweet society of Saints and Angels, yea of Jesus Christ himself, which they shall then and there enjoy, and that for ever? we know *fellow-travellers* love to be talking of their way, making that sure, that they are right, *Jer.* 50.4,5. and shall not Christi-
Joh.14.6. ans (who are journying together *with their faces Zion-ward, going*, though possibly, weeping as they go) talke of *Christ, the way*, Heb. 12. 14. and *holi-*

ness,

ness, without which no man shall see the Lord, 2 Cor. 13. 5. Make Christ sure, that they *are in Christ, and Christ in them; making their Callings and Elections sure, giving all diligence thereunto?* 2 Pet. 1. 10. Surely it is all the reason in the World, that they should be much in thinking, and much in speaking of such high, such holy and happy things as these are: None is ignorant, how good Yeomen, Farmers, and Husbandmen, when they meet at Markets, or Faires, at home, or in the Fields, delight to discourse it about grounds good or bad, the best seed, seedmen, and seedtime, about weeding their Corne in due time, casting out the Cockel and darnel, burning the twich; and when harvest comes, O how they work it with both hands, and their Tongues are going as fast as their hands, in talking, laughing, whistling, and singing, and when it is harvest home with them, O what shoutings and acclamations, what hooping and hollowings, so loud and shrill, as that the Hills and Dales ring again, and Eccho it unto them! and to make up the Solemnities of their joy, the Horns

are

are winded, trumpets ſounded, yea the fidlers alſo are ſometimes playing, with boyes and girles dancing: And when harveſt is come home, the grain houſed, then the ſame husbandmen will be talking as faſt as ever, touching their threſhing, fanning, ſifting, and ſo forth: and their skill and wiſedome in managing theſe their affairs, is the gift of God: as the Prophet plainly and fully acknowledgeth, ſpeaking of the *Plowmans plowing all day*; *his Caſting abroad the fitches, and ſcattering the Cummin*; his ordering *the wheat, the barley, and rie in their places*, ſaith, *his God doth inſtruct him to diſcretion.* Againe, *how the fitches are beaten out with a ſtaff, and the Cummin with a rod.* How *bread Corne is bruiſed.* He Concludes, *This alſo cometh forth from the Lord of Hoſts, which is wonderfull in Counſel, and excellent in working.* And to make way for this ioyfull harveſt, husbandmen ſpeak often of plowing, and that ſoon enough, and deep enough, though in the cold winter ſeaſon: much, very much, if not too much of the Countrye mans diſcourſe is harping upon theſe ſtrings:

Iſa. 28. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.

and

and shall not the generation of believers, *who themselves are Gods husbandry*, be much in talking (they cannot be well too much) about those several grounds, the *high way*, the *stony* and *thorny* ground, the good ground also, mentioned by Christ in the parable, with the interpretation thereof. 1 Cor. 3. 9. Mat. 13. 4, 5, 7, 8, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.

And how the Word of God, in the plainness and power of it, is the good, the best seed, faithful Ministers, such and such, are good seeds men, this life, and therein youth especially when Consciences are stirred by the good motions of the holy Spirit, is the time, the onely seed time with us? and withall shall not believers speak often one to another about cutting down, and plucking up by the roots, the Cockel, and the darnel, the weeds, and the twich, errors in judgement, unbeliefe, spiritual pride, earthly minededness, and all disorderly passions and affections, consuming and destroying them by that *spirit of judgment and of burning*? And though the Christians harvest, their full harvest, come not till that last and great day, when all the elect, their souls and bodies

dies being reunited, (as shocks of Corne fully ripe) shall be gathered into those everlasting barnes, and be housed in glory; yet shall the husbandman all the year long rejoyce and solace himself in the hopes of a rich Crop when the harvest comes: and shall not believers all
Rom.5.2. their life time, *rejoyce in the hopes of the*
Isa.9.3. *glory of God?* and *their joy be as the joy of harvest?* yea, *their joy be unspeakable, and full of glory?* and in order to all this, shall not believers in their Christian Conference together, much and seriously mind each other to look to it, that the plough of legal Convictions, Compunctions, and Humiliations, hath gone deep enough in their hearts, *breaking up their fallow ground, that they*
Jer.4.3. *sowe not among thornes?* Certainly all the reason imaginable, excites the people of God to such kind of discourses as these are. Again, we see how all men who are dealers in the world, will be talking how the market goeth, what good commodities in one kind, or in another, they can buy, and upon what easie rates; and shall not believers speak freely, and frequently, among themselves,

ſelves, (rejoycing therein, and giving glory to God onely) what good penny worths, they make, (if I may ſo expreſs it) how they have the choiceſt and the rareſt commodities to be had, and that upon the loweſt terms? *Iſa.*55.12. *Rev.* 3.18. *Waters*, to cool and cleanſe them; *Wine*, to glad and chear up their ſpirits; *milk*, to nouriſh them; *bread*, to ſtrengthen their hearts, yea and *Eye-ſalve, that they may ſee*; *Gold, that they may be rich*; *and white raiment, that they may be clothed*, to wit, Chriſt and his Spirit, grace and glory, and all this, (more than which is not to be had) *without price, and without monies.* It is but ask, and have; but take by believing, and its all yours; ſurely ſuch bargains as theſe, are worth the having, the thinking of, and ſpeaking of, with the higheſt exultations, and with all poſſible triumphing of ſpirits whatſoever. Yet farther, ſhall Scholars, when they meet, diſcourſe it, concerning the famous Schools they were bred in? ſhall their Tongues run nimbly whiles ſpeaking of Arts and Sciences, of Logick, or Philoſophy, or of Divinity, dogmatical, or poiemical, yea in

in all manner of humane learning, whether Grammatical or Academical! And shall not Christians, when they meet, tell one another how they were all trained up in one School (it's the best, a none-such) the School of Christ, how they were, and still are his disciples, his Scholars, how Christ is their Master, hath taught them *to fear God, and keep his Commandments; to denie their own righteousnes, and to establish the righteousnes of God in Christ*, hath taught them those hard lessons of Faith, and repentance, *of loving their enemies*; so that they know *how to want*, and *how to abound*; *how to be emptie, and how to be full*, Mat. 5 44. Act. 5.31. yea, how to live, and how to die: In a word, *That they can do all things through Christ strengthening the*, Phil.4.11,12,13.

Ma. 4. 38.
Eccl. 12.
Ro. 10.3.
*Eph.*1.2.

Once more, shall Lawyers talk much of their Cases, and trials, and why not Christians be putting of Cases of Consciences, and of the trials of their faith, in times of temptations, persecutions, and defertions; when the very *trial of their faith is more precious than of Gold that perisheth?* Shall Physitians and Chyrurgions

1 Pet. 1.

rurgions with their Patients, be continually talking of what wonderful Cures have been wrought by them, or upon them; I, saith one, was even wasted and worne even to nothing but skin and bone, by pining sickness, and a long lingering Consumption, but such a Doctor cured cured me, and I am now full and fleshy, strong and hearty: And I, saith another, was troubled with sore Eyes, had almost quite lost my sight, but such an Oculist healest me: and I, saith a third, was grievously vexed and tormented with the stone for so many years together, Oh the grinding pains of the stone, how have they held me as upon the rack for weeks or months together; but such a Chirurgion cut me, fetched it away, so bigge, so ragged; and now I am at ease, and as well as ever; and what? shall not the generation of believers speak much and often of Christ their great Phesicion, what strang, yea, miraculous Cures he hath wrought in them, for and upon them, how they were in their unregenerations *pining away for and in their iniquities*; a spiritual Consumption upon their soules, being Ezr. 24. 23.

ing hereditarie, from their fore-Fathers even as far as *Adam*, yet Christ recove-
Hos. 14. 4. red them, *healed their backslidings*. How they were as to spiritual Eye-sight, not onely dim-sighted, but quite blind, yea
Eph. 1. 1,5. born blind, *but now they see*; he annointed their Eyes, so that they see: yea are quick-sighted through grace in the things of God; how they were born with *a stone in their hearts*, Rev. 3. 18. worse than those in the back or bladder;
Ezek. 36. but Christ hath graciously *taken away that stony heart, and given a heart of flesh to them.* Yea more than all this, Christians can and do tell one another, how they were born *Lepers*, over-run with a noisome leprosie of sin from head to foot; how that no sooner were they born, but *legions* of Devils got possession of them (so many beloved lusts, as bad, or worse than so many Devils) and how they were still born dead, quite dead in Trespasses and Sins; but now through the riches of Grace in Christ, the Lepers are cleansed, the
Eph. 2. 1. Devils are cast out, and the *dead are quickned* and raised to the life of grace and glory. To hasten, shall Souldiers,

old

old Souldiers love to be talking of what battels they have been in, what sharp Conflicts and hot disputes they have had with such and such enemies, what victories obtained, what spoils they have divided, what joyful triumphs they have solemnized? and shall not *Old Disciples*, yea, all experienced believers, who are *the good souldiers of Jesus Christ*, discourse, and love to discourse, what spiritual combats they have had, with the Devil, the world, and the flesh, the corruption of their own hearts, their unbelief, pride, passions, covetousnes; how they have conflicted with ungodly men, their *Cruel mockings*, and *persecutions*, yea how they have gotten *the victory*, have *overcome the world by their faith*; (*Heb.*11.36. *Gal.*4.29. *Joh.* 5.4.) what spoils they are inriched with, what answers to prayers, what mortifying of such and such Corruptions, what eminent growth in grace, how faith hath been marvellously strengthen'd, love inflamed, zeal fired, longing after communion with God heightened, and the like;

and all this, because they fought under such a Captain, who puts spirit and life into all marching under his banners, even *Jesus Christ the Captain of their Salvation*, yea, *the Lord of Hosts himself, mighty in battel? Heb.2.10. Jer.50. 34.* Again, shall wrestlers and racers speak much of their strength and swiftness? And why not believers of their *wrestling, not against flesh and blood*, only, *but against principalities, and powers*, Eph.(6.12.) *and of their running with patience the race set before them?* He. 12.1. and how, *they can do all things, through Christ which strengtheneth them? shall wise men be speaking, yea glorying in their wisdome, mighty men glorying in their might, and rich men in their riches, which is their sin and their shame?* and shall not the Saints of the most high God, *each glory in this, that he understandeth, and knoweth me*, saith the Lord, which glorying is their duty, and honour also? yea, *glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom*, or whereby, *the world is Crucified unto them, and they unto the world?* shall men addicted to recreations, who devote themselves to hunting and

Phil. 4. 13.
Je. 9.23, 24.
Gal. 6. 14.

and hawking, fishing and fowling, speak much of what delight and contentment they find therein; one praising his pack of Hounds, for being well mouthed, hunting close and round, as in a ring; another commending his hawk for mounting high, as an Eagle, even to the Skies, and when the fowle ariseth, for falling and shooting down upon the prey, like a thunder bolt out of the Cloudes, and so forth? Then surely the generation of believers have more cause to speak one to another, and that (not with a carnal and sensual delight, as men in their sports and recreations but) with a spiritual and heavenly chearinesse, of what contentment and satisfaction they have found in God, delighting themselves in the Lord their God? *David* speaks to all his fellow Saints, *Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul*, to wit, how he hath heard my prayers, quickned me when dull and dead, raised me up when I was brought very low, *delivered me from the hands of all mine enemies, and from the Hands of Saul*, Psal. 18. *the Title:* *Ps.* 66. 16.

He giveth us his judgment plainly, *A day in thy Courts, O God, is better then a thousand: and backs it with the choice he made; I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, then to dwell in the tents of wickedness*, Ps. 84. 10. Talk with men, called of God according to his purpose, who in their youth poured out their soules to vanities, to all manner of sports and pastimes, and they will ingeniously confess, that they find more sweetness and hearts solace in one hours communion with God in secret prayer, in one day of humiliation, or thanksgiving, in hearing a good Sermon, or in being partakers of the Lords Supper, and so *sitting with the King at his Table*, (Can. 1. 12.) then they did in all their youthfull games and recreations all their dayes. To conclude, shall the worst of men, the cheating gamester, the swinish drunkard, the beastly adulterer, be so bold as to talke, and that in a jolly boasting way, of their false Dice, and coggings, of their drinking down such and such, laying them under the Table, of their defiling Women or Maidens, satisfying their

their lust to the full with them, *all glorying in their shame?* Phil. 3. 19. and shall not Christians in their Conference speak freely with joy and thanksgivings (ascribing all the glory to the Lord their God) of their diligence and faithfulness in their lawful callings, of their Temperance and Chastity; yea farther, how their hearts have bin raised up and ravished with holy Meditations, and heavenly ejaculations; how their spirits are got above the world, whilst in the world; how *their fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ*, through the Spirit, 1 *Joh.* 1. 3. *How the Father and the Son love them, make their abode with them, and manifest themselves unto their soules*, Joh. 21. 23. How Jesus Christ is pleased *Can.* 1. 2. *to kiss them with the kisses of his mouth*, day by day? O Friends, what I say, are not bare words, and notions, but things and realities, and glorying herein is good, for it is *glorying in the Lord.* But I fear my fancy and pen run too fast and too far in this argument, possibly to the tiring of some faint and feeble readers: Therefore in a word, know,

the Devil drives a great and mighty, though an ungodly and accurſed Trade in the Tongues of Sinners; they ſpeak often one to another, corrupting, poiſoning, and debauching each other, and how unwearied are they in this drudgery, advancing and promoting to their uttermoſt the Kingdome of darkneſs, and of the Devil, as they are going toward Hell together: and ſhall not our God, and Father, and our dear Redeemer Jeſus Chriſt, carry on an holy and bleſſed Trade, (if I may ſo phraſe it) in the mouths and lips of his Saints and Servants, his ſons and daughters, to the convincing and converting of ſinners, if poſſible; or at the leaſt, to the rendring them more inexcuſable in that great and terrible day of the Lord; and to the edifying, ſtrengthening, and comforting one another, ſpeaking much of God, and for God, even with all their might ſtriving and labouring to inlarge the Kingdome of Chriſt in grace here, and ſo in glory hereafter. Whilſt we are Travellers here below in our preſent pilgrimage, to be very buſie, active, and toyling, as it were, in the work of

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the Lord, will doubtless be upon our account to our safety, comfort, and honour, in that happy day of our Lords appearance, *Awake, awake, O my glory*, Psal. 57.8. Let each real Saint say, *Let us therefore arise and be doing, and the Lord will be with us and prosper us*, 1 Chr. 22. 16.

Having proposed several arguments enforcing the necessity and usefulness of Christian Conference, I proceed to lay down some directions, for the better performance of that great and weighty duty; which may fall under two heads, either habitual preparation for, or actual execution in the discharge of that duty.

Touching our habitual preparation for this spiritual service, let me commend to all, *Habitual preparation.*

1. *Heart puritie*, full of God, and good, which will fill the mouth with discourse of God and good, *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*, Mat. 12. 34, 35. As the fountain is to the stream, such is the heart to language; both good, or both bad: And 1. *Heart puritie.*

our present state being mixed and imperfect, the purer the fountain is, the more Christal are the streams flowing from it. But for the making up this heart purity there is requisite.

1. *By Blood.* 1. Our being *washed white in the blood of Jesus Christ*, Rev. 1.5. Nothing washeth white indeed, but bloud; and no bloud, but the *bloud of the Lamb*, Rev. 7.14. not Tears, though penitential Tears, and rivers of these Tears; for all our Tears, when all is done, even themselves need washing. The justification of our persons by the gracious imputation of the righteousnes of Christ, and by faith received, is the prime and grand requisit; pride and vain glory may squeeze good words out of the mouths of persons, unjustified, unsanctified, strangers, meer strangers to regeneration, (they lisping and stammering, shuffling and bungling at it), but holy language never floweth freely and sweetly indeed, till Christ dwelleth in the heart by faith. That *Tree of life*, whose *fruit is for meat, and leaves for the healing of the Nations*, makes, and alone makes fountains and streams,

ſtreams, hearts and language, ſweet and wholſome, which elſe would be bitter and brackiſh, yea noiſome and poiſonous. Heb. 9. 13, 14. The *Apoſtle argues* from the leſs to the greater, from the Law to the Goſpel, *if the blood of bulls* &c. *How much more* &c.

2. Waſhed alſo in the waters of the Sanctuary, by the *holy ſpirit of Sanctification*, infuſing and implanting gracious qualities and habits into the Soul, fitting it to utter ſpeech gracious, and ſuch as may miniſter grace to the hearers; and that from ſuch principles as theſe. 2. *By the Spirit.*

1. An habit and principle of faith, eying God & eying duty; *I believed* (ſaith holy *David*, Pſal. 116. 10.) *therefore have I ſpoken.* Prayer is faith ſpeaking to God; and holy Language, is faith ſpeaking to men; faith herein eyeing the command of God, is obedient and doth dutie; and eyeing promiſes of bleſſings thereunto annexed, is heartened and takes incouragement. 1. *Faith.*

2. Love to God, to our neighbours, and to our ſelves, that God's glory may be advanced, our neighbours ſpiritual 2. *Love.*

good

good promoted, and our own inward peace preserved, by a Conscientious discharge of this dutie. The truth is, (to speak plain English) that even forward professors themselves being too miserably Tongue-tied as to Christian Conference, argueth, that there is but little true love to God, to our neighbours, or our selves, to be found in us. *Paul* had another frame of spirit, more lively, more communicative, *Rom.* 1. 11, 12. *He longeth to see* the Romans, *that he might impart to them some spiritual gift, to the end that they might be established, that he might be comforted together with them, by a mutual faith.* And this is certain, his way of imparting to them, was not in preaching to them onely, but in conferring and discoursing with them also, for their establishment, his comfort and theirs, and the glory of God in all. *Knowledg puffeth up, but charity edifieth,* 1 Cor. 8. 1. *Puffeth up*, as a bladder with wind: Charitie *edifieth*, or buildeth up others, as an house or Temple for God.

3. There

3. There is required an holy *fear*, and awe of God upon our spirits. *They that feared the Lord* (saith the Prophet *Mal.* 3. 16.) *spake often one to another*, &c. and therefore they *spake often one to another*, because they *feared the Lord*. And the reason is cleare, and plain: all who fear God, know that he is offended by sinful silence, as well as by sinful language. Omissions are destructive as well as Commissions, and negatives as positives. The *servant that hid his Talent*, is punished with a vengeance, Mat. 25. 30. *Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* Not only that *evil servant which smote his fellow servants, did eat and drink with the drunken; when the Lord came, was cut in sunder, and had his portion appointed with hypocrites where is weeping & gnashing of teeth?* Mat. 24. 48, 49, 50, 51. The same dreadful doom and dismal vengeance falls on both; the idle servant, and the wicked. Silence or speech, if sinful, are both accursed. 3. *Fear.*

4. *A musing*, meditabundous spirit, much fits and disposeth us for holy Conference, 4. *Musing.*

ference. They who are much in the thoughts of God are like to be much also in speaking of God, and for God; Mal. 3. 16. *They that thought on his name spake often one to another.* *David* tells us Psal. 39. 3. *My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned; then spake I with my Tongue.* Be it he spake in Prayer to God; as his next words import, *verse* 3. *Lord make me to know my end,* &c. It holds also in holy Conference, words for God; though to men. A full vessel must have vent: and an heart full of holy meditations, will vent it self in holy communications with men, and in holy ejaculations, prayers, and praises to God.

5. *Delighting in God.*

5. *A delighting our selves in God,* his word, works, and wayes, would dispose us to a more warme and frequent speaking of God, his word, works, and wayes. Naturally men love, and take occasion to be speaking of such things as they are much delighted in. Holy *David* who said *Ps.* 119. 24. *Thy Testimonies are my delight,* said also, *vers.* 72. *My Tongue shall speak of thy words.* And again when he had said, *I will speak of*

thy

thy Testimonies before Kings, and will not be ashamed, ver. 46. he adds his incitement thereto, *I will delight in thy Commandments which I have loved.*

6. *Wisdome* is a great requisite, for the well ordering of the Tongue; to know *the time to speak, and the time to keep silence,* Eccl. 3.7. *The vertuous woman openeth her mouth with wisdome.* And *the man that refraineth his lips is wise also,* Prov. 31. 26. Prov. 10. 19. Wisdome keepeth the door of the lips, openeth and shuts them in due season; It's the Wisdome of the Magistrate which guides a tumultuous people: the wisdome of the Pilot, which steers the ship tost with winds and billows; and it is wisdome in believers, which ruleth Tongues, as tumultuous and turbulent as winds and waves, or as an heady multitude: *It is an unruly evill,* saith the *Apostle, James* 3.8. 6. *Wisdom.*

7. And lastly, he that will order his Tongue well, and his discourse aright, had need be one of great *courage* and resolution; for many and great discouragements will arise from within and from without, to stop the course of 7. *Courage.*

Christian

Christian Conference: *David* is a resolved man, *Psalm.* 39. 1. *I will take heed to my wayes that I offend not with my tongue. I will keep my mouth with a bridle*, (Orig. A bridle or muzzel for my mouth.) And *Job* is so resolved a man, as that he binds himself by an oath, as God liveth, my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit. The Tongue is as the bow, words as the arrows, (it's Scripture language) courage and resolution are as the armes which bend and draw the bow; wisdome as the eye, which levels and layes the arrow right: both together shoot near, or hit the mark and white, in Christian Conference.

Job. 27. 24.

2. *Direct. A forme of sound words.*

A second preparative direction for the well managing of Christian Conference, is, to get and *hold fast a form of sound words in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus*, 2 Tim. 1. 13. *Faith and love*, that is, what is to be believed, and done, and so takes in the whole systeme and body of Divinity. If this would be, and was a good help to *Timothy*, for the carrying on of the

the work of his Ministery, then surely, it is greatly usefull for private believers in the maintaining of Christian Conference, in the places and companies into which providence casts them. For knowledge guides the motions of our lips, as eyesight doth the motions of our feet. A blind man must be lying, sitting, or standing still; if he will be going, he soon stumbles, and falls. An ignorant person must keep silence: if he will be talking, he soon trips and falters, and falls under disgrace and Contempt, in an understanding company. And these heads of divinity in order to Christian Conference, may be either,

1. *General*, which concernes all persons, in all places, and at all times. As, 1. Concerning God, his Titles, Names, Attributes, works of Creation and Providence. Or 2. Concerning sin, its heinous nature, how it and nothing else is abominable to God, and destructive to man. Or 3. touching death, how all must die, none knoweth how soon. Or 4. concerning Christ, the great and glorious work of redemption, wrought by him; his ability, and willingness

1 *General matter.*

willingneſſe to ſave every poor loſt ſinner, who cometh to him for life; how little we are ſenſible of our want of Chriſt, or of the worth of Chriſt, how little Chriſt is prized by us, or beloved of us, or believed in, or longed after by us, or of that abſolute indiſpenſable neceſſitie there is of our getting union with him, or elſe of our unavoidable miſery, and that for ever. 5. As alſo concerning hell, the pains and torments of the damned, endleſs, eaſeleſs, and remedyleſs; and touching alſo the joyes of Heaven, and happineſs there, ſuch *as eye hath not ſeen, eare hath not heard, nor hath it enter'd into the heart of man to conceive*, 1 Cor. 14.9. and theſe too for ever and ever: And withall concerning doomſday, that dreadful day, when that trumpet ſhall ſound, that lowd ſhrill voice be heard all the world over, *Ariſe ye dead*, and come to judgment; when the earth and the Seas ſhall give up their dead, and all ſhall ſtand naked before that righteous Judg, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, out of whoſe mouth ſhall proceed thoſe two laſt words, *Mat.* 25.34,41. *Come ye bleſſed*, and

and go ye curſed, &c. and ſo Saints and ſinners ſhall part for ever: *The righteous*, who are *the bleſſed of the Father, inherit the kingdome prepared for them* and *go into life eternal:* but *ſinners ſhall go into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his Angels.* Theſe particulars, an ancient Miniſter (now with God) laid down thus:

Thy God, thy ſin, thy death, thy Chriſt,
The eternal pains of Hell,
The Joyes of Heaven, the day of doome,
Theſe ſeven remember well.

Add hereunto the vanitie of all Creature excellencies, riches, pleaſures, honors, beauties, wit, ſtrength, nimbleneſs of body, *&c.* as alſo buildings, feaſtings, wine, women, muſick, or what ever any miſtaken ſoul calls delectable. *Solomon*, the wiſeſt of Kings, got up (if I may ſo expreſs my ſelf) to the top of the mountain of all Created excellencies; and ſeeing multitudes clambering & climbing up the hill after him, ſome for riches, ſome for pleaſures, ſome for honours, *&c.* he beckons to

them all, and cries aloud, down again, back again, back again, I have seen, and find all to be *Vanitie of Vanities, Vanitie of Vanities*, Eccl. 1.3.

Especially let me commend to you two common Theams for the Subjects of your discourse; the sinfulness and miserie of man by nature; with the beauty and lovelinesse of Jesus Christ: for the bringing others under the due and deep convictions of sin in themselves, and of righteousness in Jesus Christ to be found, and in him onely; that so sin may be imbittered, self may be emptied of all it's own conceited righteousness, and Christ may be indeared, as the onely rock to build upon; and holiness embraced, as the *way to happiness*, and glory, *Heb.* 12.14. Deale with the sons and daughters of men, as the Spouse of Christ dealt with the daughters of *Jerusalem*, *My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand: his head is the most fine Gold*, &c. and so goeth on in a larg and lively description of Jesus Christ; and concludes, yea *he is altogether lovely: this is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters*

Can. 5. 10 *to* 16.

of

of Jerusalem. Who knows but others thereby may be enamoured with Christ, and stir'd up to make enquiry after him, as the daughters of *Jerusalem* did; whose question presently it was, *Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women, whither is he turned aside, that we may seek him with thee?* Can.6.1. An heart fill'd with sweet Meditations concerning Christ, and warm affections to Christ, will be breaking out in high commendations, and recommendations of Christ to others also; witness *David*, who saith, *Psal.* 45.1. *My heart is inditing of a good matter*, and presently adds, *I speak of the things I have made touching the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.* [*Is inditing*] in the Original, toileth, or bubleth up, fryeth, as in a frying pan, to wit, my heart studieth and prepareth, by warm and fervent meditation; alluding to the *Mincah*, or meat-offering under the Law, made of fine Flour, and dressed in the Frying-pan, boyled in Oyl, and then presented to the Lord by the Priest, (*Lev.* 2.5,8,9.) So the matter of Divine Meditation, is as the *Mincah*, the ob-

lation boiled in the grace of the holy Spirit, as in Oile, so prepared, and presented to the Lord by Christ our great High-Priest. Such should all our Holy Meditations and Communications be, the Spirit of God being as firelight in our heads, and heat in our hearts, would make our Tongues run as the Pens *of ready writers*, talking and discoursing of God, and of the great concernments of our soules and of eternity. Heads fill'd with the knowledg of God, his Christ, our Jesus, and hearts filled with Faith and affiance in Christ, and so with warm affections to Christ, would provoke us to speak freely and frequently to others, imparting our spiritual experiences to them, carrying Christ to the Children of men, inviting and drawing others to Christ, exerting and putting out to our uttermost that strength of grace which we have by grace received, thus laying out our talents for our Masters use.

2. Special matter.

2. And particularly, it is a good preparative for Christian Conference, to be well stockt and furnished with special matter of discourse, for special occasions,

occasions, as to times and persons, and the condition of those with whom we do or may converse; If with young people, wishing them to *remember their Creator in the dayes of their youth*, 2 Tim. 2. 22. If with aged persons, advising them to look to it, that *their hoary heads be found in a way of righteousness*, (Prov. 16. 31.) and telling them, that *a sinner, though of an hundred years is accursed*, (Isa. 65. 20.) asking them, whi- they have found that promise made good to them and in them, how that *they shall bear fruit in their old age, and shall be fat and flourishing*, (Ps. 92. 14, 15.) to wit, in knowledge, grace and holiness: If with *afflicted ones*, in any kind, minding them how the time of being *afflicted*, is a time to be much in *prayer*, Jam. 5. 13. *Call upon me* (saith the Lord) *in a day of trouble*, Psal. 50. 15. Though we must *pray continually*, (1 Th. 5. 17.) yet then in an especial manner; and repent also, as good King *Hezekiah* did, *in his sickness he prayed and wept sore*, Isa. 38. 2, 3. If with persons full of wisdome, and policy, mighty men for strength and souldiery, wealthy

1. *Young.*

2. *Old.*

3. *Afflicted.*

4. *Prosperous.*

thy men, full of Monies and Treasures, mind them of the Prophets advise and Counsel, *Jer.* 9. 23, 24. *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdome, neither the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that gloryeth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exerciseth loving kindnesse, judgment, and righteousnesse in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith, the Lord.* Tell the strongest, sturdiest, and stoutest men you talk with, that as lustie as they are, a few fits of an ague may soon weaken them and bring them low enough; or that a Consumption, or any pining sickness, may bring them to be bare skin and bones, very Skeletons, or Anatomies; and to be sure in old age (if they live to it) *The keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves*; and the hoary head will hang down: *the grave must be their house, and their long home, and their faces bound in secret:* wish them *to remember the dayes of darkness, for they shall be many*, Ec. 12. 3, 5. Job. 17. 13. Job 40. 13. Eccl. 11. 8. If you meet with *rich men*,

Charge

Charge them to be rich in good works, and to honour God with their ſubſtance, and to make them friends of the Mammon of unrighteouſneſs, 1 Tim.6.17,18. Pro.3.9. Luk. 16.9. If with poor people, firſt relieve them, and then charge them *not to ſteal, not to take the name of God in vain; to get poverty of ſpirit, and then they are bleſſed; to be rich in faith, and ſo heirs of the Kingdome*, Prov. 30. 9. Mat.5.31. Jam. 2.5. 5. *Rich.* 6. *Poor.*

Here's a large field before me, but I'le run and haſten. If you diſcourſe with Magiſtrates, be their humble remembrancer, that Gods great ends in his conſtitution of civil powers, are, that they ſhould be a *terror, not to good works, but to the evil, be able men, ſuch as fear God, men of truth, hating covetouſneſs*, Rom.13.3. Exo. 18.21. If with *Miniſters*, adviſe them, *to take heed to themſelves, and to their Doctrine; continue in them*, &c. *to be examples to believers in word and converſation*, 1 Tim.4. 12, 16. Tell them, they are, in a ſpecial manner, *the ſalt of the earth*, (Mat.5.13.) to ſeaſon the places wherein, and the perſons among whom they live, with ſoundneſs 7. *Magiſtrates.* 8. *Miniſters.*

of Doctrine, and integritie of life and conversation; your Doctrine giving the people the Rule, and your lives the example: *but if the salt hath lost it's savour, it's good for nothing, no not for the dung-hill*, Luk. 14. 34, 35. It's true, not alone of Scandalous Ministers, but of Apostate Christians and backsliding professors.

9. *Married.* If you discourse with *married* persons, husbands and wives, advise them to be *Luk.* 1. 6. as *Zacharie and Elizabeth, both righteous before God, walking in all the commandements and ordinances of the Lord, blamelesse: and in particular, the husband to love his wife, even as himself, and the wife to see that she reverence her husband*, Eph. 5. 33. If with unmarried ones, counsel them,

10. *Unmarried.* *to care for the things of the Lord, how they may please the Lord*, 1 Co. 7. 32. but if they think good to marry, *let them marry, onely in the Lord*, vers. 34, 39.

11. *Parents.* If you meet with *parents*, advise them, *to bring up their Children in the nurture, and admonition of the Lord*, Eph. 6. 4. *To bring them up*, that is naturall; birds and beasts bring up their young: *In the nurture*, keeping them in awe and order, that's moral; men as men, being rationall

nall and prudent do it: *in the admonition of the Lord*, that's Christian and spiritual. If *with Children*, enjoyn them, *to obey their Parents in the Lord, for this is right*, Eph. 6. 11. And to prevent their stubbornes and disobedience; mind them of that terrible commination, *The eye that mocketh at his Father, and despiseth to obey his Mother, the ravens of the vally shall pick it out, and the young Eagles shall eat it.* And how that under the Law, *Deut.* 21. 18,19,20,21. *The stubborn and rebellious son which would not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, was to be stoned to death.* If you discourse with governors of Families, Masters or Mistresses, mind them, *how they must give unto their servants that which is just and equall, knowing that they also have a Master in Heaven*, Col. 4. 1. And how they must look to it, that their *men-servants* and *maid-servants* (as well as themselves and their Children) sanctifie the Sabbath, according to the Fourth Commandment, not suffering them to idle it, or to wander abroad vainly upon the Lords day. If you have occasion to deal with *servants*,

12. *Children.*

13. *Governors of Families.*

14. *Servants.*

Charge

Charge them, *to obey their Masters in all things, not with eye-service, as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God. Not answering againe, not purloining, shewing all fidelitie*, Col. 3. 22. Tit. 2. 9, 10.

15. *Ignorance.* Yet again, if you meet with them that are ignorant, tell them, *That the soul be without knowledge is not good*; and the high aggravation of the gross ignorance of many, is, that *they are willingly ignorant*, neither know, nor desire, or care to know the things of God, *Prov.* 19. 2. 2 Pet. 3. 5. If with men of

16. *Knowing.* knowledg, caution them to beware least their *knowledg puffeth them up*; but rather being acted and managed by and with *Charitie*, that *it edifie*, being laid out for the good of others; and their lips being *the lips of the righteous*, let them *feed many* by Christian Conference and holy communication with others, 1 *Cor.* 8. 1. *Prov.* 10. 21.

I might be very large and voluminous herein; but to close up this direction; be still furnished to speak to any persons whatsoever, of such points as are of universal concernment, as touching regeneration; the absolute, indis-

pensable

penſable neceſſity of it to ſalvation: as alſo touching our having a ſaving intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt. Chriſt told *Nicodemus* in plain terms, (*Joh.* 3.3,5.) *That except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdome of God.* And expreſly (as to the neceſſity of union with Chriſt) *He that hath the Son, hath everlaſting life; and he that hath not the Son, ſhall not ſee life, but the wrath of God abideth on him*, verſ. 36.

A third preparative direction, for the promoting of Chriſtian Conference, in all places and companies where we come, is to *begin at home* each Chriſtian ſetting it up and keeping it up in his own houſe and Family, that ſo wife, Children, and ſervants, may gain an habit of good and ſavoury diſcourſe, to be acted and exerciſed when you or they go abroad; as children, mannerly, or rude and unmannerly at home, uſe ſo to carry themſelves abroad alſo: and ſuch talk and diſcourſe as is uſed at home by husbands and wives, Parents and Children, Maſters and Servants, is like to be their language abroad alſo. The Lord by *Moſes* gives his peremp- 3. *Direction.*

tory

tory command, as to good discourse in families, *These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in thy house, and in thy lying down, and rising up*, Deut. 6. 6,7. Such was wise King *Solomons* practice, which gave occasion to *Sheba* Queen of the South in her Princely visit to him, to say unto him, *Happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdome*, &c. Custome is another nature: use legs, and have legs: use memory, and have memory: use good discourse, and you will have good discourse. I have seen Children, boyes and girles, had to neighbour houses, upon occasion of feasting, visits, or the like; and when their parents call upon them for manners, saying, sirra, where's your hat, and your leg, and girle; where's your Cursy? but no hat off, no leg or Cursy made, why? not used to it at home. So when we come into Christian Company, and we provoke our selves to carry on good discourse, and say, *Awake my glory*, Answer is given, no, sleep at home, must sleep abroad also. Acts frequent beget habits

habits acquired, and strengthen infused. A dexterity in the managing of Christian Conference aright, as to matter, manner, principles, and ends, is I presume, an infused habit, a special gift of God. *The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.* [*Given me,*] that is, me the Prophet in his measure; or rather, *given me,* is meant of Christ, on whom the Spirit is poured without measure, yet so as that every believer hath his proportion of the Spirit, and so of this gift and habit of Christian Conference to be used, and so improved and strengthend, by a frequent and vigorous acting of it for the glory of God, and the good of our selves and others, with whom we have occasion to converse. Let it be one of thy Christian exercises, to act and strengthen this habit, day by day, in this language and communication. *Isa.* 50. 4.

A fourth preparative direction may be repentance and *humiliation* for our great failing in our great neglect of so great a duty as Christian Conference is. We spend little of our time and strength 4. *Humiliation.*

ſtrength in this duty, to wit, in ſuch diſcourſe as hath a proper and direct tendency, to the converſion or edification of the hearers; we are much, if not too much upon this talk, what newes abroad? ſpeaking of perſons, this body, or that, magnifying ſome too high, vilifying and depreſſing others too low; poſſibly erring in a way of flattery on the one hand, or of envy and hatred on the other; blameworthy in both.

5 *Prayer.* A fifth Direction I would give, is, the pouring out a prayer to God in faith and love every morning, that he would guide thy diſcourſe all the day long. It was *Davids* prayer, *Pſ.* 141.3. *Set a watch O Lord before my Mouth, keep the door of my lips:* And again, *Pſ.*51.15. *O Lord open thou my lips, and my mouth ſhall ſhew forth thy praiſe*; and that thou mayſt pray in faith, plead the promiſe, *The Tongue of the dumb ſhall ſing*, Iſa. 35.6. fulfilled in the Goſpel Corporally and Spiritually: Chriſt made, and ſtill makes the dumb to ſpeak, and that to his, and his Father's glory: when *they brought a dumb man to Chriſt, poſſeſſed of a Devil, Chriſt caſt out the Devil,*

Devil, and the dumb spake, &c. Mat. 9. 32, 33. Then the promise was made good in the very letter of it: and in the spirit of it also, when *the Children in the Temple cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David,* Mat. 21.15,16. and so fulfil'd that prediction in *Psal.* 8. 2. *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praises.* Go to God in Christ, and say, what though a kind of dumb Devil possesseth me; thou canst, and do thou cast him out. What though I be but a babe in Christ, and a suckling in grace, yet thou canst, and O do thou, out of the mouth of a babe and suckling, as I am, ordaine strength. Pray in faith, fervency and constancy, and who knoweth, but the gracious Lord thy God may loose and unty thy Tongue, and create the fruits, even of thy lips, peace, peace, for his own glory, the good of others, and thy comfort here and for ever: And in thy discourse let holy secret ejaculations be frequent and fervent also.

A sixth Direction, is to be much in *praises*, (which also will make prayer more successful) having found by sweet experi- 6. *In prai-ses.*

Optimum rogandi genus est gratia agere.

experience, that God doth enable thee sometimes to let fall some good words, in obedience to his Commandment, eyeing his glory, and the good of the hearers, *telling them what God hath done for thy soul*, Ps. 66. 16. Be sure to offer up to God *the Calves of thy lips*, a sacrifice of praises on that behalf. In the evening look back on the day past, and say, what have my words bin this day; if vain and idle, be humbled, and lye low before the Lord; if at all gracious and savoury, lift up thy heart to God in praises, giving him all the glory. Thus farr concerning our habitual preparations for Christian Conference. Now touching actual execution, when we are in company, take these following directions, which may fall under two heads; Negative directions, and positive.

1. Negatives to be cautioned against and carefully avoided.

1. As to the *outward man*, that the body be not distempered, and so indisposed for so spiritual a piece of service as Christian Conference is, as by intemperance, or excess in eating and drinking, which hath a spice of gluttony or drunkenness

drunkenneſs in it, when it unfits for duty, or this duty among the reſt. Meats and drinks immoderately taken in, fill the head with fumes and vapors, and incline to ſleep rather then diſcourſe: if the mouth take in too much, the tongue is likely to ſend out too little, as to Conference heavenly and ſpiritual. The body is to ſoul as the inſtrument to the Muſician: let the Muſician be never ſo skilful, yet if the inſtrument be out of tune, there's like to be but little melody. Though the head be full of good notions, clear and ſtrong, the heart ſtored with grace and good affections, yet a diſordered body marrs the muſick of holy diſcourſe and Conference.

2. As to the *inward man.* 2. *Inward man*

1. Beware of *irregular paſſions*, diſturbances in the affections, the lower part of the ſoul of man. To inſtance only in anger, griefe, and fear. *Anger* diſpoſeth a man to ſpeak too much, and grief too little; and fear, not to ſpeak at all, or elſe in an abrupt and broken manner. I remember, in univerſity diſputations, if the opponent could put the reſpondent, or the reſpondent the 1. *Paſſion.*

opponent into a flame of anger, or into a damp of pannick fear, he would soon non-plus and gravel the Antagonist. It's much so in Conference, though about matters of Religion: violent passions obstruct and impede the understanding faculty, in its clear and distinct actions and operations. Passions when boiled up to an undue heat and height, do no more befriend the intellect in it's reasonings and argumentations, then foggs, mists, and clouds do the Sun in its shinings; not at all, they obscure and much darken the Sun and so doth passion reason.

2. *Pride.* 2. Beware of *Pride*, high, overhigh thoughts and conceits of our selves, our sufficiency and ability. 1. *Pride* usually is a great *ingrosser*, takes up all the time and all the talk, as if he were the only Rabby, the Teacher, Master, all the rest fit only to be hearers and his Disciples; inverting or perverting the words of the Apostle, who bids us *be swift to hear, slow to speak*; Jam. 1. 19. The proud man is slow to hear, swift to speak. 2. *Pride* is a *deceiver*, speaking beside the condition, or above the Capacity

pacity of the Company; The reason is, because the proud man is a self-seeker, carried and acted by a principle of vain-glory and ostentation; and therefore speaks what he apprehends himself best able to speak, as what he hath lately heard, or read, though impertinent as to his present auditory, or so sublime as to matter and language in School-distinctions and metaphysical notions and speculations, as that the Company know not what he sayth, or whereof he affirmeth. An evil found among some publick Preachers sometimes, who though they speak English, preach (as it were) in an unknown Tongue, much above the Capacities of the people, who go away fill'd with admiration of the mans parts and gifts, though nothing at all benefited, as to edification or salvation: yet wit and eloquence is good, even in Conference, provided it be without vain affectation, be clearly to be understood, be dissuasive from evil, and persuasive unto good.

3. In reference to the whole man. Beware of *losing time*, precious time; whilst you be in company, not trifling

3. *In reference to the whole man.*

or squandring it away in sinful silence, or in vain and worldly talk, much less in sinful and corrupt Communication; the least minute of time being too good to be spent in idle words, not tending at all to the glory of God, or to the spiritual advantage of our selves or others.

Solius temporis sacra avaritia.

A *Heathen* by the light of Nature could say, that of time alone there's a sacred covetousness. And the Apostle, by the light of the Spirit, saith, *that the redemption of time*, is a considerable part of our Christian wisdome: *walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise*, how so? he adds, *redeeming the time* &c. redemption of time is laudable, yea necessary, for self-examination, soul humiliation, secret prayer, reading and searching the Scriptures, meditation when alone, and for good discourse when we are with others.

Eph. 5. 15, 18.

2. For *positive* directions, take them then,

1. Common discourse.

1. *Common discourse* may be *introductory* to special and spiritual; and interjectory, cast in by the by, as sauce to meat. For instance, it's lawful, & in some cases a duty to discourse of things natural,

tural, as of diet, physick, medicines for the preserving or restoring of health and strength in our selves or others, to discourse of things civil, and moral, buying, selling, manuring of Land, plowing, sowing, family concernments, publick affairs of Nations; and even this discourse may be in a sence spirituall, in regard of principle and ends, when it's done with an eye to Gods commands; receiving directions for the *ordering and guiding of affairs with discretion*, one property of a man *fearing God*, Ps. 112. 1, 5. And to discourse touching the state of *Zion* at home or abroad, is not only lawful, but an high and holy duty, provided we doe not discourse it barely as Newes; for so it leaves us, as it found us; but to provoke us to suitable affections of rejoycing with the sons and daughters of *Zion* when they rejoyce, and weeping with them when they weep, and to excite us to such holy duties, as the present providence calls for at our hands; as good *Nehemiah asked Hanani, and the men of Judah, concerning the Jews lost in the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem*; and hearing that they were *in great* *Neh.* 1. 2, 3.

affliction and reproach, and how the wall of Jerusalem was broken down, and the gates thereof burnt with fire, O how deeply was he affected therewith, how did he lay it to heart: *when I heard these words, I sat down and wept, & mourned certain dayes, and fasted and prayed before the God of Heaven,* vers.4. His prayer is upon record, *vers.5. to the end of the Chapter.* And withal, *when the Lord turneth again the Captivity of Zion, we are like unto them that dream, our mouth is filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing,* Psal.126.1,2,3,4. Such Sympathizing frames are sweet and honourable.

Mirth and Cheerfulness.

2. *Mirth* and pleasantness of speech, by way of chearines and recreation, is not only lawful, but expedient by way of introduction, or of interjection, cast in now and then, being as sauce to the meat that so more solid and serious discourse may go down more easily, and it may be more profitable also. And now I am accidently (as it were) fallen upon this Theame, give me leave to speak something concerning this kind of talk; though it be a digression, and should

should be somewhat a large digression; yet by the blessing of God, it may be for his glory, and the spiritual good of readers, or hearers; which I desire may run in three streams, 1. Shewing the *lawfulness* of mirth and pleasantness of speech, and in some cases a dutie. 2. Touching the *usefulness and expediency* of it in some cases. Thirdly *Cautions* to prevent miscarriages therein, which are soon and easily run into; a merry heart being like a boyling pot, which if not well eyed, and looked to, will quickly sieth over. 1. As concerning the *lawfulness* of mirth and merry discourse, even to laughter, methinks its evincible upon these accounts.

1. God and Nature hath given man a faculty of *risibility*, as a property distinguishing him specifically from other Creatures, and surely not in vain, but this Facultie may be acted and exercised; and *Solomon* tells us, *that there is a time to laugh*, as well, *as a time to weep*, Eccl. 3. 4. And if mirth and laughter be lawful, then chearful discourse is lawful also, as being a natural means, exciting thereunto, or rather part thereof. 1. *Natural Faculty.*

2. *Commended.* 2. It's highly commended at least, if not commanded also by the wisest of Kings, acted and guided by the inspiration of God, who tells us, *that there is nothing better for a man, then that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour; This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God,* Eccl. 2.24. chap. 3.13,22. chap. 5. 18. chap. 8.15. He oft strikes and harps upon this merry string. When he saith *there is nothing better* &c. he speaketh not absolutely and simply, for the love and favour of God in Christ, the fear of God seasoning our hearts, is far better; yea, the assurance of the acceptation of our persons and services is better also, as being the ground and occasion of our mirth and merriment; as he expresseth it, *Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works,* Eccl. 9.7. The root is better in the fruit, the cause in the effect; *To know our acceptance with God* in all our natural and civil mirth and merriment, though it be also honest and lawful. So that when he saith *nothing is better*, he speaks comparatively,

comparatively, that riches, houſes, lands are good, but the comfortable injoyment of them is better, uſing them to the glory of God, to the chearing up and refreſhing our ſelves and others, doing good with them, and rejoycing in God in the liberal, yet ſober uſe of them. And to be ſure, the Spirit of God in *Solomon* had no mind by theſe expreſſions to patronize Epicuriſme, ſenſuality, gluttony, drunkenneſs; though ſome wanton prophane wits may ſtudy to wreſt ſuch a carnal liberty from them; which to do hath in it a ſpice of blaſphemy.

3. It's *commanded* alſo; and it is not only lawful, but a duty: *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoyce ye righteous, and ſhout for joy all ye that are upright in heart*, Pſal. 32.11. [*Shouting*] is laughing in its elevation and triumph. But why? Becauſe *He that truſteth in the Lord, mercy ſhall compaſs him about*, verſ. 10. It's commanded by the *Apoſtle*, *Rejoyce in the Lord alwayes, and again I ſay rejoyce*, Phil. 4.4. *Rejoyce evermore*, 1 Theſ. 5.16. You'le ſay, this joy is ſpiritual; Yea, that is it I'de have, as beſt 3. *Commanded.*

best becoming the gravity and sanctity of Christians. Joy in the heart, holy, and heavenly, venting it self by a lightsome countenance, by chearful discourse, and singing also a duty much neglected, scarce any more inforced, four times in a verse, *Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our king, sing praises*, Psal. 47. 6. and civil mirth, if regular, helps rather then hinders spiritual, of which by and by.

4. *Promised.* 4. It's *promised*, and duties are couched in promises: what God promises we shall be, or do, is our duty to be and doe, *They shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever*, Psal. 22. 26. [*shall live*] or be lively, chearful, comfortable; as when *Jacob* heard that *Joseph* was alive, *the spirit of Jacob revived*, Gen. 45. 27. To the same purpose, *The humble shall see this and be glad, your heart shall live that seek God*, Psal. 69. 32. As at the down-fall of Gods and his Churches enemies; so upon *Doegs ruin*, it's promised, *That the righteous shall see and fear, and laugh at him, Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength*, Psal. 52. 6, 7.

5. *Practised*

5. *Practised* by the best of Saints. The man after Gods own heart was the sweet singer of *Israel*. He's upon a merry pin, but an holy, a pin in the Sanctuary: He cries out, *Awake my glory, awake Psaltery and Harp; I my self will awake early*, Ps. 57. 8. or, *I'le awake the morn*, be up before it, and fit it up, especially when it goes well with *Zion*; The Book of *Esther* is a book of Providence, of amazing Providence: *Esther* is made Queen, is spirited for the work with zeal and wisedome, *Mordecai* is advanced, *Haman* is hanged, the *Jewes* are delivered, and by them their enemies destroyed; and what joy and rejoycing is thereupon? *Their Purims* instituted, *dayes of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor*, Est. 9. 20, 21, 22. Like to them, this was the temper of the Churches of God, when the Jewes returned out of the *Babilonish* Captivity; *When the Lord turned again the Captivity of Zion, we were like to them that dream; then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing*, &c. I might tell you how that before all this,

5. *Practised.* Ps. 12. 12. *Ainsworth.*

this, when *Pharaoh* and his hoſt were
Exo. 19. 1. drowned in the Red ſea, *Moſes and all Iſrael ſung a ſweet ſong unto the Lord*, &c. and how after all this when Antichriſt, that great Phariſaical of *Rome* ſhall be deſtroyed, the Saints will have a merry time of it; *when the harps of them are in their hands, and the Song of Moſes and of the Lamb in their mouths*, *Rev.* 15. 2, 3.

I confeſs the joy and rejoycing commanded, promiſed, and practiſed, was, for the main, ſpiritual, heavenly, and ſupernatural, yet not excluſive of mirth natural and civil, for there was feaſting:
Eſt. 8. 17. *Neh.* 8. 10. *The Jewes had joy, and gladneſs, a feaſt and a good day*, and in their feaſts, *did eat the fat, and drink the ſweet.* And let me adde this, that even civil mirth, well ordered and regulated, is a good natural preparative for rejoycing in a more ſublime and holy manner: And the reaſon is, becauſe of the Spirits which are in men, natural, animal, and vital ſpirits, ingendred in the Livers, heads and hearts of men, which being kept up lively and agil by civil mirth, are as wings to the Souls even of Saints, in their ſublimer, higher, and nobler operations;

operations; And herein I may appeal to the experience of the choicest servants of God; who find when their spirits are down and low, an indisposition in them thereby for holy duties. The disciples themselves, when they should have been watching and praying, *Jesus Christ found them sleeping for sorrow.* But when our Spirits are up, lively, and cheary, they dispose for duty, and our heads and hearts, as wheels oyled, move more nimbly. *Luk.* 22. 45.

2. As for the *usefulness* and expediency of mirth and lightsomness (I say not levity) of spirit, It's not only serviceable to the soul, in its gracious actings, and operations, (as I said before) but to the body also, for the preservation of health and strength, vigor and activity, by the multiplying and refining of spirits in us: *A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance.* It doth good indeed to the whole body; but the good it doth, appears and shewes it self especially in the Countenance, as being made thereby more amiable and lovely, the eye more lively and sharp-slighted, the Cheeks more ruddy, the *Prov.* 15. 13.

2. *Useful.*
1. *Preservation of the bodies health.*

the bloud more pure, and sparkling. Though the countenance onely is mentioned, yet the whole body is to be understood, as receiving good by the hearts cheerinesse; for though the soul and body differ in substance, as spirit and flesh, yet God having joyn'd them together in so close a union, (as to the making up of one person) they mutually sympathize each with other, a sickly body makes a sad heart, and a wounded spirit makes a crasie bodie; and I think the body is less able to bear the souls burdens, then the soul is the bodys. To return to what is in hand, that [*a merry heart, countenance*] appears by the example of *Esau* (none of the best) whose heart being gladded by the present sent by *Jacob*, when they met, his countenance was so cheerful that *Jacob* said, *I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God.* And by *Daniel*, and his associates (none of the worst) who though they did eat pulse onely, and had nothing but water to drink, yet *their countenances were fair and fat*, (*Deut.* 12. 15.) Why, they had merry hearts, quiet consciences in their breasts and

Gen. 33. 10.

and bosomes, arising from their reconciliation and peace with God. It's not choice meats and drinks, much less painting or dawbing with vermilions, but a good conscience that makes a merry heart, and so a cheerful countenance. To the same purpose, *vers.* 15. *He that is of a merry heart, hath a continual feast.* By [*a merry heart*] he means not carnal mirth and jollity, in eating, drinking, singing, musick, dancing this he elsewhere calls *madness*; but the merry heart he commendeth, is a good conscience sprinkled with the bloud of Christ; his righteousness being imputed to us for our justification; and so having peace with God, and peace of Conscience: which the Apostle expresseth *by a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfained*, 1 Tim. 1.5. Once again the wise King tells us, *That a merry heart doth good like a medicine*, Prov. 17.22. and that because cheerfulness of spirit helps Nature's operations with its food and Physick, whereas sadness and heaviness of heart hinders both. I'le close up this with a true story. I was once in company at dinner (where kindred and friends *Eccl.* 2.2.

friends were met; and among the reſt, one (a learned and godly man) was very merry in telling Tales, breaking jeſts, harmleſs and inoffenſive; Yet I was ſomewhat troubled to ſee and hear it, and in ſome heat break out, and asked him, ſaying, Sir, I pray what is the meaning of thoſe words of the Apoſtle, *Let your communication be that which is good to the uſe of edifying?* to which he anſwered me to this purpoſe; we have bodies to edifie as well as ſoules, and harmleſs mirth doth good to both; and ſo it doth, if it be well and wiſely ordered.

Eph. 4. 29.

2. Honour to Religion.

2. This chearineſs of ſpirit in Company hath its uſefulneſs in reference to others, even *thoſe without*, who are ſtrangers to the work of grace, and [illegible]es of Chriſtianity; and are apt to [illegible] up prejudices againſt the people of God, as a moroſe and ſour people; and that the li[illegible] they lead is but an uncomfortable life, full of melancholy; and they verily think, that when any ſet their faces this way, Zion-ward, that they never have a merry day after, but live mopiſhly and diſconſolately all their dayes:

dayes: Now the harmleſs mirth and merriment in the communications and converſations of Chriſtians, is a practicall and reall confutation of this miſtake, and ſo is a removing of that ſtumbling block in their way, and withall a fair invitation, and allurement of them to come in, and to ingage in a ſtricter and higher profeſſion of Saintſhip, when they are eye and eare-witneſſes of its conſiſtency with all poſſible civil mirth and merriment, which is lawfull and commendable. Let me back this from my own experience. I knew a Lawyer of good parts and practice, who being naturally of a lepid and chearful ſpirit, and poſſeſt with hard thoughts touching Religion in the ſtrictneſs of it, and exactneſs therein, as neceſſitating the profeſſors thereof to lay quite aſide that kind of mirth which he was addicted to, was thereby kept off from ingaging himſelf in any forwardneſs in Chriſtianity; but afterwards obſerving the carriage of ſome Miniſters of note and eminency for piety and Miniſterial abilities, how pleaſant they were, how facetious in their diſ- *Inſtance.*

course (yet still keeping within the bounds which God in his Word had set them) he changed his opinion, embraced the Societie of the Saints, walked with them in the wayes of God, and died, I believe, a true servant of God, and of his Christ our Jesus, and that he is now in glory: To strengthen this argument, I'le commend to the reading a little Treatise, made by a learned holy man, whom I knew both in his life and death.

The mirth of a Christian life, by Zac. Bogan *printed at* Oxford 1653.

3. This chearinesse of spirit, hath this commendable vertue in it, that it puts a shine and *lustre upon duties*, and offered of love performed to men, (and that in the eyes both of God and man) *God loveth a cheerful giver*, 2 Cor. 9.7. and man also, and a cheerful lender to, cheerfulnes in a child or servants obedience, O how lovely is it! Its so also between husbands and wives, those offices of love they discharge each to other, with readines and chearfulnes, what a beauty doth it add thereunto? But on the contrary, when these or the like services are performed, but unwillingly and by constraint, with a sad look,

3. A lustre upon duties.

and

and a lowring countenance, they are render'd ingrateful and unacceptable. Whats a feast, if no mirth there? good looks and language are one of the best dishes at the Table.

Having spoken concerning the lawfulness, and usefulness of civil mirth; I proceed to lay down some cautions, to prevent disorders and irregularities therein. 3. *Cautions.*

1. As to the timing of mirth, it must be seasonable; when *Zion* weeps and bleeds, for the sons and daughters of *Zion* to be upon a merry pin, (I speak of common civil mirth) especially if with constancy, and some heights therein, is as unseasonable, as snow in harvest, an high and heinous provocation: *When the Lord calls to weeping and mourning, and if in that day, behold joy and gladness, and eating flesh, and drinking wine; and surely, saith the Lord of hosts, this iniquitie shall not be purged from you till you dye*, Is.22.12.13,14. True, *When the Lord turnes againe the Captivity of Zion, then let our mouthes be fill'd with laughter, and our tongues with singing*, Psal. 126. 1, 2. But when the Jewes are in 1. *Unseasonable.*

Captivity, *then by the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept, we hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof*, Psal. 137. 1, 2. And yet by the way let me insert this, that spiritual mirth and rejoycing in the Lord, is alwayes a dutie, and in the worst of times, to be performed by the generation of believers, *Phil.* 4. 4. *Hab.* 3. 17, 18. *Eccl.* 10. 19. *A feast is made for laughter*, saith the Preacher; but at a funeral, sighing and mourning is more seasonable; especially on a day set apart professedly for solemn humiliation, even civil mirth seems abominably unseasonable. Let me add also, on *the Lords day*, the Christian Sabbath, our common civil mirth may well be spared, *the doing our own wayes, the finding our own pleasures, the speaking our own words*, Isa. 58. 13. Being under a special inhibition; whereby the word [*own*] we understand not, wayes, pleasures, or words in themselves sinful (for such are unlawful at all times) but such as are lawful on other dayes, but on the Lords day unlawfull, as concerning worldly imployments and recreations. Its true, it is a duty *to call the Sabbath*

abbath a delight; but the more ſpiritu- and heavenly our joy and rejoy- ings are, the more in the Lord, the ore agreeable with the day of the ord: to the advancing of which holy irth, there is by divine appointment *Pſalme for the Sabbath day*, Pſ. 92.

2. Civil mirth muſt not be *immea-* *rable*, exceſſive, and without meaſure. he commendation of all our Civil leaſures, are the ſparing uſe of them. o be alwayes in a merry vain, jeſting nd laughing, is a ſwerving from the ravity and ſanctity of Chriſtianity: leaſantneſs of ſpeech ſhould not be ſed as meat to feed the company with eſts; (frollick frothy jokes are but indy, not overwholſome,) they may e indeed, as ſauce to meat, to quicken ppetites unto more ſolid and wholſome iſcourſe, or to fit our ſpirits for high- r duties; facetious ſpeech is to a ſober ind, as whetting a ſithe is to mowing; oo much whetting, turns the edg of he Sithe, and unfits it for ſervice; he who is alwayes whetting, is an idle mow- r, or rather mowes not at all; and he hat is alwayes jeſting, may go for a

2. *Immea-* *ſurable.* *Voluptato commen- dat rarior uſus.*

vain person, or a vile one rather.

1. *Not with the sins of others.*

1. Not sporting our selves, makin our selves or others merry with ou own sins, or the sins of others; such man is one of *Solomons* fools, *It is sport to a fool to do mischief*, Prov. 10.2 And again, *Fools make a mock at si* Prov. 14.9. That is, obdurate, and ha dened sinners, having their Conscienc seared, and being past all sense of good nes, take a kind of complacency an delight, as in the acts of sinning, so i their talking of it, and making them selves and others merrie with it after ward. Then to set men, or Children o fighting, and to rejoyce in seeing the beat and hurt each other; then wit many youngsters, never so merry a feas as where there is stoln venison, rabbet hens, or other provision, *To whom sto waters are sweet, and bread eaten in s cret is pleasant*, Prov. 9.17. as some l quorish, and therein theevish servant though they have good food allowe them, and enough of it; yet get som dainties in a corner, how pleasantly d they go down! or as adulterers, an adultereſſes, their secret uncleanneſſe

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are *the stollen waters and bread in secret*, which the Spirit chiefly aimeth at, as the Context sheweth: Its sad to hear how some men will in a jocular way, boast how many women and maidens they have defiled, and how often. So that woful generation of men, *who are mighty to drink wine; and men of strength to mingle strong drink*, Isa. 5. 27. How they'l merrily among their pot companions vaunt and brag it, that so many quarts they took off at a sitting; laid such a man asleep, drunk another dead down, laid him under the Table, and glory in their shame. So the Gamesters, the Jewel of their mirth is many a time, their cheating such and such an one who played with them, how they fetched him over for so many pounds, it may be hundreds; so the malicious persons of a vindictive spirit; how is it mirth and musick to them to boast how they have made even with such or such an one, and hope they have given him his own, and shall not die in his debt. I might inlarge in this too copious a subject, but in brief, all this kind of mirth is madness, and indeed monstrous,

for men to rejoyce in that for which they ought to mourn; to laugh at that till their sides ake, and their eyes water, for which they should rather grieve till their hearts ake, and rivers of Tears flow from their eyes, as did *Davids* and *Jeremiahs*, Those choice servants of the most high God, *Psal.*119.136. *Jer.* 9.1,2,3.

4. Not Scripture or matters of Religion.

4. Not the Scriptures, or matters of Religion. Jesting in Scripture phrases, and the language of the Holy Ghost, as *Politian* the Heathen, and *Julian* the Apostate, it's a Character of profanes in any, and in such as profess Christianity, of profaneness with an accent of high aggravation, and carrieth also much of danger with it; if it be ill jesting with edged tools, then surely *with the Word* of God, *which is the sword of the Spirit, and sharper than any two edged sword*, Eph.6.17.Heb.4.12. Kings and Princes do not take it well from their subjects, that they should scoff at, or sport themselves with their Lawes, Acts, and Proclamations. The holy Scriptures they are Laws, Acts, and Proclamations of the great God, the King of Kings, and our making

making our selves or others merry, in a trifling, jesting, and sinfull way with them, will kindle and incense the wrath and fiery indignation of the highest Lord against us: and if not repented of, and quenched with the blood of Jesus Christ, will end in everlasting burnings in Hell, and *misery* for ever.

5. Not *at the Saints* and Servants of the most high God, calling them by way of scorn and derision, the holy Brethren and Sisters; and the Ministers of Christ, calling them Priests, *Baal's* Priests, Parsons, Sir *Johns*. Those ill bred children who mocked *Elisha*, saying, *Go up*, &c. had the sore curse of God befell them, 2 *King*. 2. 23, 24. Job, *a perfect and upright man*, as the Lord himself testifies of him, he is *a by-word among the children of fools*, Job. 1. 1. and *Ch.* 30. 9. And holy *David*, that man after Gods own heart, *he's the song of the drunkard*, Psal. 69. 12. And he complaineth, *Psal.* 35. 15, 16. *The abjects gathered themselves together against me, they did tear me, and ceased not, with hypocritical mockers* 5. *Not the Saints*

mockers in feasts; they gnashed upon me with their teeth. It seems there was in their dayes, as it hath been in ours, some professed jesters, who were a kind of smell-feasts, who made it their work at feasts, to jest and scoff it, to make the company merry; and who is the man they sport with, upon whom do they set their wits on work, but *David*, the choicest Saint in his age? There hath been an usage with some of our Nobles formerly to keep Jesters (fools they call'd them, or made them rather) to make them merry at meales, and in their mirth, the *Jobs* and *Davids* of that age must be their laughing stocks: and wise men abused, to make fools merry. Add to all this, your Stage-players, who in their Comedies, Interludes, Balls, have personated in a way of taunt and scorn, learned and godly Ministers in their habit, yea in prayer and preaching. But no more of this, least the age stink we live in, in the nostrils of our childrens children. If any such abomination be amongst us, *Tell it not in Gath*, &c. 2 Sam. 1.20.

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Let us rather say with *Jeremy*, *O that my head were turn'd to waters*, &c. And oh the patience and long-suffering of the Lord, the great mighty God, who doth not send some signal token of his wrath on such abominable wretches as these are, sending them packing out of the world with a vengeance.

6. Not the *natural infirmities*, or calamitous conditions of others, to break jests upon, and insult over others, because crook-shouldred, wry-necked, flat-nosed, wide-mouthed, dim-sighted, lame-legged, club-footed, or the like, carrieth barbarism and inhumanity in it. No, though thy enemy, *Rejoyce not*, (saith *Solomon*) *when thy enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth, lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him*, to wit, to be avenged on thee, Prov. 28. 17, 18. *Natural Infirmity*

7. Not *prophane* as to God, or *injurious* to our neighbour; profane in reference to God, when there is a light and jocular using of any of his titles, names, or attributes, or of any part and portion of *Not prophane or injurious*

of the Scriptures, which the proud and profane wits of men are too apt to make too bold with: But I have touched upon this already. Nor may our merry discourse be *injurious* to men, in their bodies, soules, estates, names, or otherwise. If thy witty talk be obscene, wanton, or lascivious, that tends to the wronging of thy neighbours chastity, and therein both the soul and body of thy neighbour, and so is a breach of the sixth and ninth commandments of the Lord our God. If it be derogating from the credit and repute of thy neighbour, bitter and absurd, this is to wrong him in his good name, a breach of the ninth commandment; yea, a provoking him to wrath and anger; yea, a driving him into passions violent and unruly; yea, thy self also: and all for want of true love to thy self or neighbour. It's a common evil, tost to and fro of men, who love death, to be reproaching, taunting, and girding at some in the company to please others; which usually carrieth with it defamation, and flatterie; defamation, to him they displease; flatterie, to him whom they strive

ſtrive to pleaſe; and humour, and great uncharitableneſs in thy ſelf to both.

8. *Not ſelf-ended*, making mirth the end of mirth, as if happineſs were placed in it, or the chief delight and comfort of life were to have a merry life of it: ſome ſuch there are, who are never better in their own conceits then when they are in a frolick humour, laughing till their ſides ake again, thinking the time is well paſſed away, when in ſuch jollities: but *Solomon*, guided by the Spirit, hath paſt his cenſure long agoe; *I ſaid of laughter it is mad, and of mirth what doth it*, Eccl. 2. 2. *Not ſelf-ended.*

2. Poſitive directions for the ordering of our civil mirth in company, of which I ſhall ſpeak briefly, the rather becauſe I have been large, if not too large in the negatives; and partly alſo, becauſe negatives include at leaſt by conſequence poſitives, as poſitives negatives. *2. Poſitive directions.*

1. Our mirth in diſcourſe muſt *be well ſeaſoned*, not ſo much with wit, as with wiſdome; not with levity, but gravity; not with illwill to any, but love to all; not raſhly, and at random (as guided by *1. Well ſeaſon'd.*

by the vaporing dictates of our wild unruly fancies) but well weighing circumstances, of persons, of whom, and to whom we speak; of time when, and places where we speak, for the consideration of circumstances is some of the cornes or graines of salt which must season this recreational discourse also.

2. *Well-designed.* 2. It must be well designed, to *right ends*, such as these.

1. *Honour of Religion.* 1. To *render Christian profession most lovely*, and desirable in the thoughts of worldly men, when they see it's consistency with mirth and chearinesse, harmless, innocent, of which before.

2. *Chearinesse of spirit.* 2. *To exhilerate* the spirits of our selves and others, when dull and heavie, that being made more quick and nimble, we may be the fresher and fitter for the duties we owe to God, or to men as men, or to Saints as Saints, as to our selves, in our callings, general or particular, whether as Christians, or as we stand in our several places and relations; *Sampson* who was one of the Lords Champions to fight his battels, and one of the Lords Saints and Servants (his name's enrolled in the Catalogue,

logue, *Heb.* 11. 32. he hath his *merry riddle*, at a feast, to prevent and shut out possibly worse discourse, as also to minister occasion of mirth to them by stirring up their wits, and busying their minds to find out the meaning of his riddle: that mirth which carries this design, the profit of our selves, or others, is lawful and laudable.

3. To facilitate the passage for rebukes, or advice, serious and weighty, which with some go down smoother in a merry word, then in plain and downright language; so that chearines of speech helps to gild over, and sweeten the bitter Pills of reproof and counsel, which are therein swallowed down, no stob made, but taken better in a jest, than in earnest; This way of dealing with others in ironical language, is frequent in the Scriptures of the old and new Testament, *Solomon, Rejoyce O young man*, &c. and since you are so wilful and heady, heed no advice that is given to you, go on, take your course, see what will come on it; *But know, that for all these things, God will bring thee to judgment*, Eccl. 11. 9. Take one of many

3. *To make way for what is serious.*

in the new Testament, *Paul* saw the *Corinthians* were a proud conceited people, though Christians, and good for the main, see how he taunts them, 1 *Cor.* 4. 8. *Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as Kings without us*: and all in an holy loving ironie.

3. *Attended with affections.*

3. Our civil mirth, as it must be well seasoned, well designed, so also must it be *well attended* with suitable affections, and such Christian graces as the present occasion calls for. To instance in a few particulars.

1. *Fear.*

1. There should be in our greatest and highest mirth an *holy fear*, and awfull dread of God upon our spirits; merriment is a kind of boiling liquor, will soon run over, if not well watched, and looked unto; we should *rejoyce in the Lord*, yet, *with fear and trembling*, Psal. 2. 11. and when we express our inward joy by outward mirth, be it in feasting, and dayes of thanksgiving, yet still with fear and trembling. It is laid by the Apostle, and charged as a crime upon those seducing teachers, that they did *feed themselves without fear*, Jude 12. To feed without any fear

fear of God, or reverence to the Church, the Saints, with whom they did eat all their *Love Feasts*, is *Bezas* note upon the place.

2. With Christian *Sympathy*, being duely sensible of, and deeply laying to heart the miseries of others, especially the distresses of *Zion* at home or abroad, *Amos* 6.5,6,7. *To chant it to the sound of the viol, and drink wine in bowles, but not to be grieved for the afflictions of Joseph*, is a provocation, threatned and plagued with desolation, *Therefore shall they go captive with the first that go Captive*, &c. 2. *Sympathy.*

3. With *godly sorrow*, mourning for the sin, whilst we rebuke the sinner. Love to God, and our neighbours, and our selves will ingage us in both mourning and rebuking also; and without this, all our *Civil mirth will end in heavinesse*, Prov. 14.13. 3. *Sorrow*

Having laid down directions for the well managing of Christian Conference, in the actual exercise of it, and that both negatively and positively, let me adde

3. *Direction in Transition.*

A third Direction; which is, by witty, yet wise transitions, to pass and slip off from common discourse, into discourses more serious and spiritual. As;

1. *words of others.* From the *words of others.* Our Lord Jesus Christ hath pattern'd and fairly copied this out to us by his own example, *Joh.* 4. 6. 15. *He being weary sat down on Jacobs well*; and presently *a woman of Samaria coming out to draw water*, Christ glides into a gracious discourse with her *about living water, the water of life*, which he himself was. Again, having rebuked his Carnal hearers who followed him *for the loaves sake*, he passeth into a holy and large discourse touching the *bread of life*, which he himself was: so preaching the Gospel from place to place. So when *Simon Peter* was astonished at the draught of Fishes, Christ said to him, *From henceforth thou shalt catch men*, *Luk.* 5. 9, 10. I might be very large herein: But why all this? surely for our imitation, that we might go and do likewise. When others are speaking of buying and selling, what good penny-worths

worths they had, mind them of *buying the truth, and not selling it*; and of *buying wine and milk*, Christ his Spirit, grace and glory, and *that without price and without mony*, (Isa. 55. 1.) the best bargain that can possibly be made, and the best penniworth that Earth or Heaven it self affordeth. If the talk be what *good news* is stirring, put in, saying, *the Gospel*, the *glad-tidings* of Salvation by Jesus Christ, is the best newes which ever was told to or heard by mankind since the world was. If the stream of discourses run concerning *great feasts* that any have made, or been at, what fat Venison they had, what plenty of the best wines they drank of; turn the stream, and speak of that royal Princely feast made by the King of Kings, and that for all his subjects, by Christ for believers, *A feast of fat things, full of marrow, of wine upon the lees well refined*, Isa. 25. 6. Matth. 22. 2, 10. When we hear others talking of *fair houses*, and stately buildings, let it draw out our discourse concerning *that building of God, that house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens*, 2 Cor. 5. 1. If of the City

rebuilding, (which work the Lord prosper) then speak of *Abraham*, *how he* (and all believers, the spiritual seed of *Abraham*) *looked for a City which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*, Heb. 11. 10. If the discourse be touching the vast *estate and revenues*, that such or such an one is possessed of, or heir apparent to, so many hundred or thousand pounds *per annum*; then declare how the poorest Saint outvies and outweighs the greatest Prince, King or Emperour, yea all of them laid together, for he is *born to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for him*, 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4, 5. All worldly inheritances are *corruptible*; as the world it self is; but the inheritance of the Saints *incorruptible*, and abideth for ever: worldly inheritances are usually much defiled, both in the getting and keeping of them in ways sinful, when restitution is not made of what was ill gotten, when *God is not honoured with their substance*, &c. either for the maintenance of an able Ministery, or for the relief of the poor, but rather spending their

estate

estate upon their lusts, pride, gluttony, drunkenness, gaming, whoring, &c. but still the inheritance of the Saints is *undefiled*, both in the getting and keeping of it, by the purchase and mediation of Jesus Christ; and the Saints using of it, which will be in the glorifying of God with it, and for it for ever and ever: yet again, all worldly inheritances fade away, but the inheritance of the Saints *fades not away*, as flowers do, or as the Laurels did with which the Victors in the Olympick games were crowned, which though green when put upon their heads, yet soon withered: but Heaven and glory will be fresh and flourishing, as at the first, so to Eternity. But I forget my self, am as in a wood or wilderness, wherein I may loose or tire my self and the Reader; the hints and intimations given for transitions, and passings from common discourse to spiritual and Christian conference, being well nigh in as great variety, as the turnes and occurrences of providence are; so that a gracious heart, somewhat fitted by natural ingenuity, but especially strength-

ened, edged and sharpen'd by the Holy Spirit abiding in it, makes well nigh every story or tale told, every turne of Providence, or word spoken, to be as a bridge or boat to carry, or waft over, from discourse natural or moral, to what's supernatural, spiritual, and Heavenly: And why should we imagine that the Devil, and carnal hearts, should be more dextrous and active in the advancing of vain and sinful talk, then the Spirit of God, and believers hearts, are in the promoting and advancing of holy and Christian Conference? especially considering that *greater and stronger is the spirit which is in us*, and so for us Saints, *then the spirit which is in the world*, and so against us Saints, 1 *John* 4.4. God is stronger then the Devil.

2. *From Providence.*

2. Having touched upon Christian ingenuity, in turning common talke (though lawful) into spiritual, which might be more for the use of edifying; let me direct also to raise up good conference from the voice of God in providences, smiling or frowning providences, be they personal, national, or oecomenical

oecomenical and Universal, such as concerne all mankind: as the wayes of God working in a tendency towards the fall of *Babilon*, or towards the rise of *Zion*, in the conversion of the *Jewes*, or the residue of the Gentiles yet in darkness worse then that of *Egypt*. Take a few instances, which may serve for those many hundreds which might be given.

1. Are great *deliverances* vouchsafed to, and bestowed upon us or others, from sore fits of sickness, from the Plague of pestilence, from dangerous falls, from perils by fire or water, from bonds of imprisonments, or from unreasonable and absurd men, or from enemies in any kind, full of malice and cruelty; then let us provoke our selves and others to gratitude, with that holy man, *What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?* Psal. 116. 12. who made also a *Psalm of praises, when he was delivered from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul*, Ps. 18. and excite our selves to answer those gracious ends which the Lord aimed at, in delivering of us; which was not *to*

do abominations (Jer. 7. 10.) but, *that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear*, (to wit, a slavish fear,) *in holiness and righteousness before him all the dayes of our life*, Luk. 1. 74, 75. This is the use God expects we should make, not alone of that grand *deliverance* from the *wrath to come*, but of those lower and lesser deliverances we enjoy here.

2. *Death of others.* 2. Again, when the newes comes, such or such an one is *dead*, or dying, the bell toles, or rings out for him, one it may be, young and strong, as likely to live possibly as any one you know; doth not now pale death, as it were take us by the hand, and lead us into a deep and due *consideration of our latterends*, which is *our wisdome*, (Deut. 32. 29.) and withal, into a serious minding and reminding of our selves and others, of our mortality, how it is *appointed unto men once to dye, and after that the Judgment*, Heb. 9. 27. as also of those two Eternities, a black eternity of woe and misery, which is the portion of sinners; and that white eternity of joy and glory, which *is the gift of God through Christ*

Christ to all the righteous, who are by the bloud of Christ justified, and by the Spirit of Christ sanctified; and say each of us within our selves, when I die, (as die I must, and that I know not how soon) whither will my soul go? to Heaven or Hell? and whereas I am now well, O where shall I be an hundred years hence, or a thousand years hence? where for ever and ever? and when *Christ comes to judge the world in righteousnes*, shall I be found among *the goates on the left hand*, or among *the sheep on the right hand of Jesus Christ?* Shall I be under that sweet and joyful sentence, *Come ye blessed*, &c. or under that dolefull doome, *Depart from me ye cursed*, &c. Matth. 25. 34, 41. It must be the one or the other, therefore let us all look to it.

3. If Providence frown upon us, or others, in smart and sore *afflictions*, near and dear relations, as husband, wife, father, mother, child, or friend, being taken away by death; sore diseases, as the Stone, Gout, Dropsie, Consumptions, or the like; or suppose molestations in estates by oppression; and injustice

3. *Any smart afflictions*

injustice from the men of the world; or defamations, by lies, slanders, and cruel mockings, blotting and blasting our names and reputations; yea, what if it comes to imprisonment, banishment, or any cutting evil whatsoever? such Providences cry aloud to us, and bid us cry and call upon others. *Let patience have her perfect work*, Jam. 1.4. *Let us search and try our wayes, and turn again to the Lord: let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the Heavens*, Lam. 3.40,41. Let us get and keep that middle golden frame of spirit, despise not, (or as the word imports, do not little) *the chastening of the Lord, neither faint, when thou art rebuked of him*, Heb. 12.5. Let us not so much desire the rod may be laid aside, as that it may bud and blossome, that so God may have his ends, his gracious ends upon us, which are *for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness*, vers. 10. Better the rod should lie on still in mercy, then be laid aside in wrath and displeasure; let not the bitter cup go out of thy hand, 'till thou hast found the Sugar in the bottome, to be sure it lies there, because

because it's a Cup in a Fathers hand. 'Twas an holy mans saying, *Sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotions.*

It were easie to be very large and copious upon this subject; not *a woman* delivered of *a Child*, but it prompts to a discourse of regeneration, and being born again, and of Christ, *That Child which to us is born, that Son which to us is given*, *whose name is called wonderful Counseller*, &c. We cannot call to mind that dreadful Plague of Pestilence one year, and the dismal burning of the City, the next; our Childrens Children, and after Ages cannot rehearse those black and horrid stories, but that they must needs suggest to us and to generations to come, how heinous and how abominable a thing sin is, which incenseth the wrath of God, (who is *the God of patience*, Rom. 15.5. whose name is by himself proclaimed to be, *the Lord, the Lord God gracious and merciful, slow to anger*, Exod. 34.6. Neh. 1.6.) so highly, as to pour out his *fury like fire*, yea in fire to the laying waste of *Englands* Metropolis in three or four days, and so to putting God, yea forcing God, as it were,

Isa. 9.6. 1665 1666

were, upon his *strange work*, which he *so unwillingly* is ingaged in. I would well hope, that whilst *England* is *England*, the Histories and Chronicles relating these signal tokens of Gods fierce indignation, will have a benigne influence (by the blessing of God) upon our posterity to the worlds end; that they may *hear and fear, and do no more such wickednes*, as we have done, *Deut.* 13.11.

4. *Strangers meet.* Again 4ly, *Strangers* meeting upon the high-way or else where, might and should discourse it; how all, even the best of men, Gods own Children, are and have *confessed themselves to be but strangers and pilgrims here*; and therefore, *as strangers and pilgrims we ought to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul*, 1 Pet. 2.11. Or, when we ask others, or others ask us, the way to such or such a place, why may not a question be put touching the way to heaven and happiness, *how Christ is the way* purchased for believers; and how, in thankfulness to God for Christ, and the benefits we have by Christ, we should walk in; *yea, run the way of his Commandements*, as holy

David

David resolved to do, *Ps.* 119. 32. Yet againe

5. When people *marry*, and matches are made, possibly with some of the relations, and you are guests also at the wedding feast; surely it would not be unbecoming Christians to be thinking and speaking of the happy condition of such as *are betrothed to Jesus Christ* (as all believers are) *and that for ever, in righteousnes, in judgment, in loving kindnes and mercies*, Hos. 2. 19, 20. *And as* John *was commanded to write, Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb*, Rev. 19. 9. As also the sad and dolefull estate of all who being invited to the wedding feast, (as all are who live under the sound of the Gospel,) Come not, *but desire to be excused, make light of it, go their wayes, one to his farme, another to his merchandize*, Matt. 22. 5. or if they come, *yet have not on the wedding garment*, (are not clothed with the righteousnes of Christ, and graces of the spirit) The Gentile hypocrite is *that man*, to whom *the King, when he came to see his guests*, said, *Friend, how camest thou in*

5. *Marriages.*

in bither, not having a wedding garment, verſ. 11, 12. Both theſe fall and lie under an heavie doom, and dreadful vengeance. The ſlighters who came not to the feaſt, probably the unbelieving *Jews*, with them *the King was wroth, and he ſent forth his armies and deſtroyed thoſe murderers, and burnt up their City.* This execution was done ſpeedily by the Romans deſtroying *Jeruſalem*, firing and demoliſhing the Temple and the City, and there was a diſmal ſlaughter of *eleven millions* of men, women, and Children, as *Joſephus* reports. And for *the man* that came to the feaſt, he made ſome Chriſtian profeſſion, but had not the wedding garment, which is the falſe unſound Profeſſour, *the Gentile hypocrite*, the King deales or will deal ſeverely with him alſo, *the man was ſpeechleſs*, or muzzled, not having a word to ſay for himſelf why he ſhould not be condemned, *verſ.* 12. but the King hath ſomething to ſay to him, which might make his heart to ake and tremble, *verſ.* 13. *Then ſaid the King to the ſervants*, to wit, the holy Angells, miniſtring ſpirits, *bind him hand and foot*, that

De bello Judaico.

that is, make him sure, as they use to do condemned persons, he is disabled to fight for himself, or by flight to make escape, being *bound hand and foot, take him away*: O that's a cutting word, if when an angry Father sayeth, concerning a froward child, take it away, away with it, the Child screams and roars, it's worse to it then the rod or whipping. If when the Judge upon the Bench, having passed his sentence of death against a Malefactor, saith, Take him Jaylor, away with him to Prison, and from thence to the place of execution; if these words be as swords and daggers piercing the hearts of the condemned; O then how terrible and dreadful beyond all expression or imagination, must it needs be, when Christ the righteous Judge shall turne and cashire sinners for ever out of his gracious presence, never to see the face of God, never to be with the Lord; this punishment of loss, privative torment, is not the least piece of the misery of the damned; and to compleat their woe and horror, it follows, *Cast him into utter, or outer darkness, Joh. 3. 19.* They loved

loved darkneſs rather then light, the darkneſs of groſs and wilful ignorance; know not, nor care to know the things of God, but are *willingly ignorant*; *ſaying unto God, Depart from us; we deſire not the knowledge of thy wayes*, 2 Pet. 3. 5. Job. 21. 14. Eph. 5. 11. And love the deeds of darkneſs; therefore the Lord juſtly caſts them into darkneſs, and they ſhall be filled with darkneſs: as they who cutting the bloody Tyrants head, threw it into a pail of bloud, ſaying, ſatiate thy ſelf with bloud. Whereas *The inheritance of the ſaints is in light*, Col. 1. 2. The portion of ſinners ſhall be *in blackneſs of darkneſs for ever*, Jude 13. And more, it's *outer darkneſs, as doggs without*, Rev. 22. 15. When believers, as the children of God, are within doors, houſed in Heaven, a place of light *and glory, the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof*, verſ. 23. And if here be not miſery enough, for what followes, *there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth*, Matth. 22. 13. Now the ſinner hath (as he thinks) a merry time of it; but there's a woe coming, *Wo unto you that laugh now*

Satio te Sanguine

now; *for ye shall mourn and weep*, Luk. 6. 25. Now *the wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth*, Psal. 37. 12. But let them know their black day is at hand, wherein they will have gnashing for gnashing; their gnashing upon the righteous, in scorne and contempt, shall be turned into a gnashing their teeth, through extremitie of paine, anguish, and horrour for ever. Having been large in this instance, my words may seem to be words of digression, or of diversion: might they (by the blessing of God) prove to any, words of Conversion or of Edification, neither writer nor reader would have any cause to repent them of their labour. 6. If we hear of the conversion of a sinner, it puts us upon rejoycing and praising God, and expressing our thankfulness in words and actions: *It was meet we should make merry, and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again*, &c. saith the Father of the returning Prodigal to his elder Brother, *Luk.* 15. 32.

6. Conversion of a sinner.

7. *A purchase made.* 7. The making a purchase of house or land, leads us into a discourse of *purchasing the field wherein lay hid the treasure*; and *of selling all, to buy the pearl of great price*, Matth. 13.44,45,46. In brief, where I have given one instance, I might with ease give an hundred, the voice of Providence uttering fresh newes every day. Providence is the best and truest interpreter of the Decrees of God; and what lay in the womb of Decree before time, even from eternity, that Providence brings forth day by day, and so administreth fresh matter continually for Christian Conference, to all that delight and take pleasure therein.

3. *From the word of God.* 3. If the voice and speech of men one to another, and the voice of God in Providence, suggest occasion for holy discourse and conference, then surely the *voice of God in his word*, read, preached, or heard, doth it much more. Christians do you not read, and search the Scriptures day by day? I take it for granted, that you do, and take delight in so doing: and what, understandest thou all thou heareſt or readest? is there nothing

nothing too hard for thee? if so, then put questions to persons of understanstanding, Ministers or people, among whom thou comest, saying, what is the meaning of this, or that portion of Scripture? And they will be opening and expounding hard places to thee: Ministers especially, *their lips should keep knowledg*, that's their duty; and for the people *to seek the law at their mouths*, is their dutie also. *Mat.27.* And studie not out questions tending to strife and vain jangling, or abstruse inquiries, to puzzle others, as some do, and go away scoffing and boasting, saying, I think I have posed one parson to day, or gravelled such or such an one, non-plust him, so that he had nothing to answer: but let the questions be such as tend to the edification of your selves, and others, by inlarging the understanding, in a way of knowledge, but principally to the warming of your hearts and affections, to the purging of your consciences, to the regulation and better ordering of your lives and conversations. For when you have heard the word preached, know it is *spiritual seed*, labour to har-

Mat. 13. 3. 4. *and* 18, 19. 1 *Pe.* 2. 2. *Isa.* 55. 2.

row it into your hearts by holy meditation, and by Christian communication, that so it may spring up and grow in heart and life, and thou maist have a rich and goodly crop of it in grace and glory: It is also our *spiritual food*, and in order to nourishment must have its due digestion. Now they tell us of three concoctions as to natural food; the first they call Chylification in the Stomack, the second Sanguification with the Liver, and the last Assimilation in every part; the nutriment being conveyed to every part, is made like to that part it is conveyed to: suitable hereunto, the Word in order to our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace, must have various digestions: First by Meditation, and Conference: A second, in our will and affections, being subdued by it, to will what God wills, to love or hate what God loves or hates: and lastly, in our lives and practice, when we *exercise our selves herein, to have consciences void of offence, toward God, and toward men*, as *Paul* did, *Acts* 24. 16. Yet there is this vast difference in the resemblance; for whereas our meats

and

and drinks are assimilated and made like to the parts of man, fed by them; the word, our spiritual food, changeth the man into its own likeness, makes the inward and outward man spiritual and holy, like it self, so far as it turns to nourishment. And remember this, that an errour in the first concoction is seldome mended in the second or third, but vitiates the whole; and the gross neglect of meditation and conference, is one great cause why we are no better in our hearts, and in our lives: and many, too many professors who hear much, but thrive little, they have, or seem to have good appetites, but to be sure they have very bad digestions, by reason of their failings in holy Meditation, and Christian Conference.

FINIS.

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2. An Expoſition of Temptation, on *Matth.* 4. *verſe* 1. to the end of the 11*th.*

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2. Likewiſe

2. Likewiſe a ſecond Part; wherein Chriſtians are directed to perform their Duties, as Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children, Maſters and Servants in the conditions of Proſperity and Adverſity.

3. The third and laſt part of the *Chriſtian Mans Calling*, wherein the Chriſtian is directed how to make Religion his buſineſs in his dealings with all Men, in the choice of his Companions, in his carriage in good Company, in bad Company, in ſolitarineſs, or when he is alone, on a weekday from morning to night, in viſiting the ſick on a Dying bed; as alſo the means how a Chriſtian may do this, and ſome motives to it.

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